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BIRTHDAY  
ISSUE!

261

# SFX

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INSIDE!

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**JONATHAN STRANGE  
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Future











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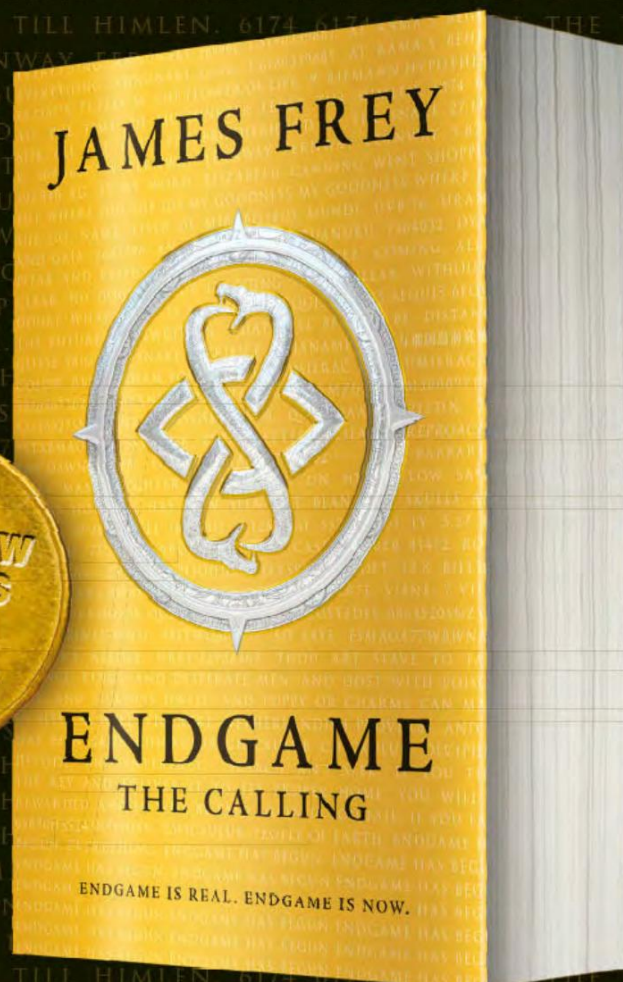
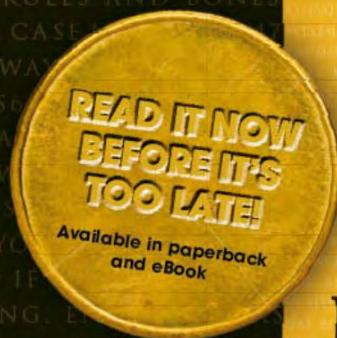
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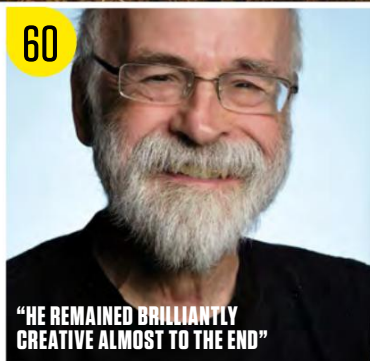
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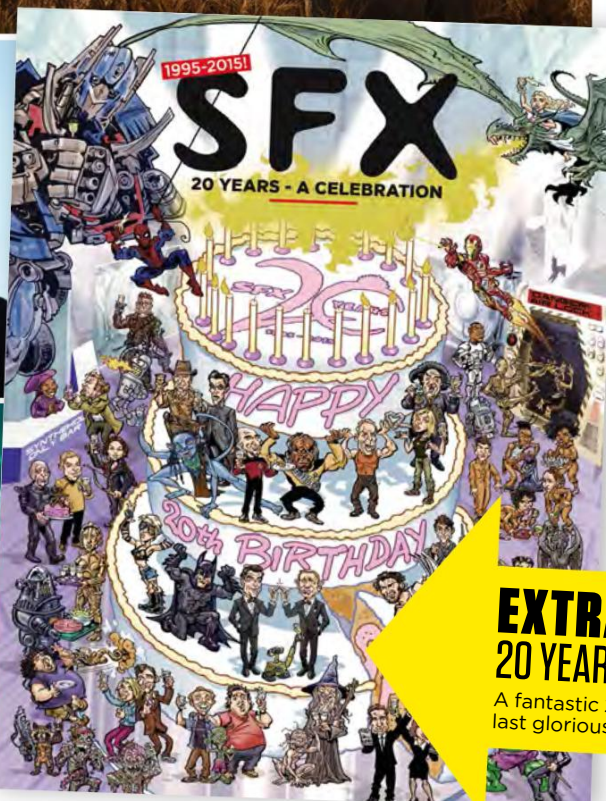


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"THESE ARE THE GLORY DAYS  
OF THE DOCTOR AND CLARA"



## EXTRA! EXTRA! 20 YEARS – A CELEBRATION

A fantastic 24-page mini magazine featuring look-backs at the last glorious 20 years – as well as a little peer into the future...



**ONE OF THE  
BRIGHTEST STARS  
OF SPACE OPERA  
IS BACK!**



# **GAVIN SMITH**

**A QUANTUM MYTHOLOGY**



*'Age Of Scorpio announces loud and clear that in  
Gavin Smith an exceptional talent has arrived to uplift SF'*  
**PETER F. HAMILTON**

**'An exceptional talent  
has arrived to uplift SF'**

- Peter F. Hamilton

**'A brutal kaleidoscope  
of imagination'**

-Hannu Rajaniemi, author of The Causal Angel

# **GAVIN SMITH**

**THE AGE OF  
SCORPIO**



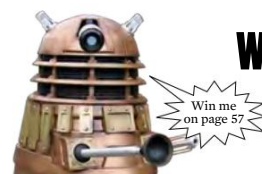
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## THE INSIDE SKINNY

What your *SFX* chums are thinking about...

### RICHARD EDWARDS EDITOR (2014-)

#### RAVES

▶ The arrival of *Age Of Ultron* means the biggest blockbuster season ever is finally here! Roll on *Mad Max*, *Jurassic World*, *Ant-Man* and the rest.

#### HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

▶ I'm really excited about new *Star Wars* and Marvel movies, but I hope the success of mega-franchises doesn't stop studios from making original blockbuster movies.



### DAVE BRADLEY EDITOR (2005-2014)

#### RAVES

▶ Late to the party, but I'm finally playing *Dragon Age: Inquisition*. Boy, that game is IMMENSE.

▶ Enjoyed *Thunderbirds Are Go* – the ships' launch sequences give me a shiver no matter how silly the story.

#### HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

▶ It's a cliché to want *Star Wars* to be good, so instead let's wish Simon Pegg well as he writes us a new *Star Trek* instalment.



### DAVE GOLDER EDITOR (1996-2005)

#### RAVES

▶ A bit late to the party, I know, but how fantastic is *Big Hero 6*? Knew so little about it before watching and was totally sold within 10 minutes.

#### HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

▶ No more *Doctor Who* episodes where the conclusion is "love conquers all". Really fed up that these days you can defeat Cyberisation by wishing really, really hard...



### MATT BIELBY EDITOR (1995-1996)

#### RAVES

▶ Thomas Pynchon's *Against The Day*. Finally finished it. No idea what it was about, but some incredible steampunk SF writing in there.

#### HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

▶ For more SF and fantasy that can hold its own – and then some – against the very best crime fiction. Too often they have us beat, and it should be the other way around.



### NICK SETCHFIELD FEATURES EDITOR

#### RAVES

▶ How great is that *SPECTRE* trailer? Waltz had better be Blofeld. If he's not I'll eat a volcano (hollowed out and filled with cheesecake).

▶ Wow, Marvel's new *Star Wars* comic actually feels like *Star Wars*.

#### HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

▶ A *Fantastic Four* film that finally brings Lee and Kirby's magic to the screen.



### IAN BERRIMAN HOME ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

#### RAVES

▶ Delighted to see horror expert Jonathan Rigby has a book on European horror films – *Euro Gothic* – coming in October.

▶ Can't wait to get my hands on Network's spiffy vinyl reissue of the soundtrack to *The Prisoner*.

#### HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

▶ After going on set, I think ITV's new *Jekyll & Hyde* series might be good Saturday-night fun.



### JORDAN FARLEY COMMUNITY EDITOR

#### RAVES

▶ Sad Joss won't be back, but *Avengers: Infinity War* is in safe hands with the Russo brothers.

▶ *Bloodborne* is a masterpiece. If you're prepared to die (a lot) it's not to be missed.

#### HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

▶ *Futurama* survived cancellation once, here's hoping it happens again!



### ALEX COX OPERATIONS EDITOR

#### RAVES

▶ *Pillars Of Eternity* is a tremendous old-school RPG, which even managed to drag me away from the oddly compelling urban planning drudgery of *Cities Skylines*. Good job!

#### HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

▶ I want *Masters Of The Universe* to be great, spawn a franchise, and revitalise that great villain, Skeletor. This won't happen, mind.



### RUSSELL LEWIN PRODUCTION EDITOR

#### RAVES

▶ I'm worried that the trailer that has roused me most this year is the one for *The Human Centipede 3...*

▶ Although I did rather enjoy the *Ant-Man* (train set moment!) and *Terminator* trailers too.

#### HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

▶ That BBC Two go back to showing double-bills of old horror films on Saturday nights.



### JONATHAN COATES ART EDITOR

#### RAVES

▶ Chris Carter's reference to new *X-Files* "stories" fills me with hope that these will be six, individual, monster-of-the-week-type episodes.

▶ *The Babadook* has even made me wary of opening my kid's book bag. Scary stuff!

#### HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

▶ That *The BFG* will mark Spielberg's return to directing great fantasy movies.



### ADRIAN HILL AD MANAGER

#### RAVES

▶ What a rollercoaster of a ride this past 20 years working on *SFX* has been! I've seen some amazing films and TV shows, and some maybe that shouldn't have been made. Here's to the next 20 years, guys.

#### HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

▶ *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. My hope is that it's not another *Phantom Menace*! Now that is one film that should never have been made!



### JAYNE NELSON FREELANCE WRITER

#### RAVES

▶ We seem to be in a golden age of SF TV. *Person Of Interest*, *Orphan Black*, *Agents Of SHIELD*, *Supernatural*, *Defiance*, *Continuum*... And so many, many more! We're blessed.

#### HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

▶ My hope for the future? That the new *X-Files* series is bloody good fun instead of being po-faced, pretentious navel-gazing.



All four of *SFX*'s editors: Matt Bielby, Dave Bradley, Richard Edwards and Dave Golder.

On 25 May 1995, a brand new science fiction and fantasy magazine landed on planet Earth. Twenty years later, *SFX* is still on a mission to explore strange new worlds in movies, TV, books, comics, games and pretty much anywhere else that's touched by the fantastical.

Two decades is a long old jaunt in anyone's money. Just comparing *SFX* with my own life, since it launched I've sat GCSEs and A-levels, been to university, left home, got my first job, bought a house, got married, had a child – basically, my biggest formative experiences have all taken place in a world where *SFX* has existed. Yep, 20 years is a *very* big deal.

Across that epic timescale, the mag has had front row seats to watch the genre landscape change beyond all recognition. When Matt Bielby and Dave Golder launched the mag, they had little idea that 20 years down the line, SF&F would be the biggest genre on the planet, conquering all before it. If they tell you they knew, ask them to pick your lottery numbers.

In this anniversary issue, we celebrate 20 years of *SFX* – and sci-fi as a whole – with a special birthday mini-mag. But we're not all about the past, and as *SFX* has always done, we also look forward to exciting new stuff heading your way, like *Tomorrowland* (p46), *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* (p72) and Marvel's *Secret Wars* (p78).

We've got many exciting years of sci-fi and fantasy ahead of us, and *SFX* will continue to boldly go where no mag has gone before. We'll be delighted to have you along for the ride.

Rich

Richard Edwards, Editor  
@RichDEdwards

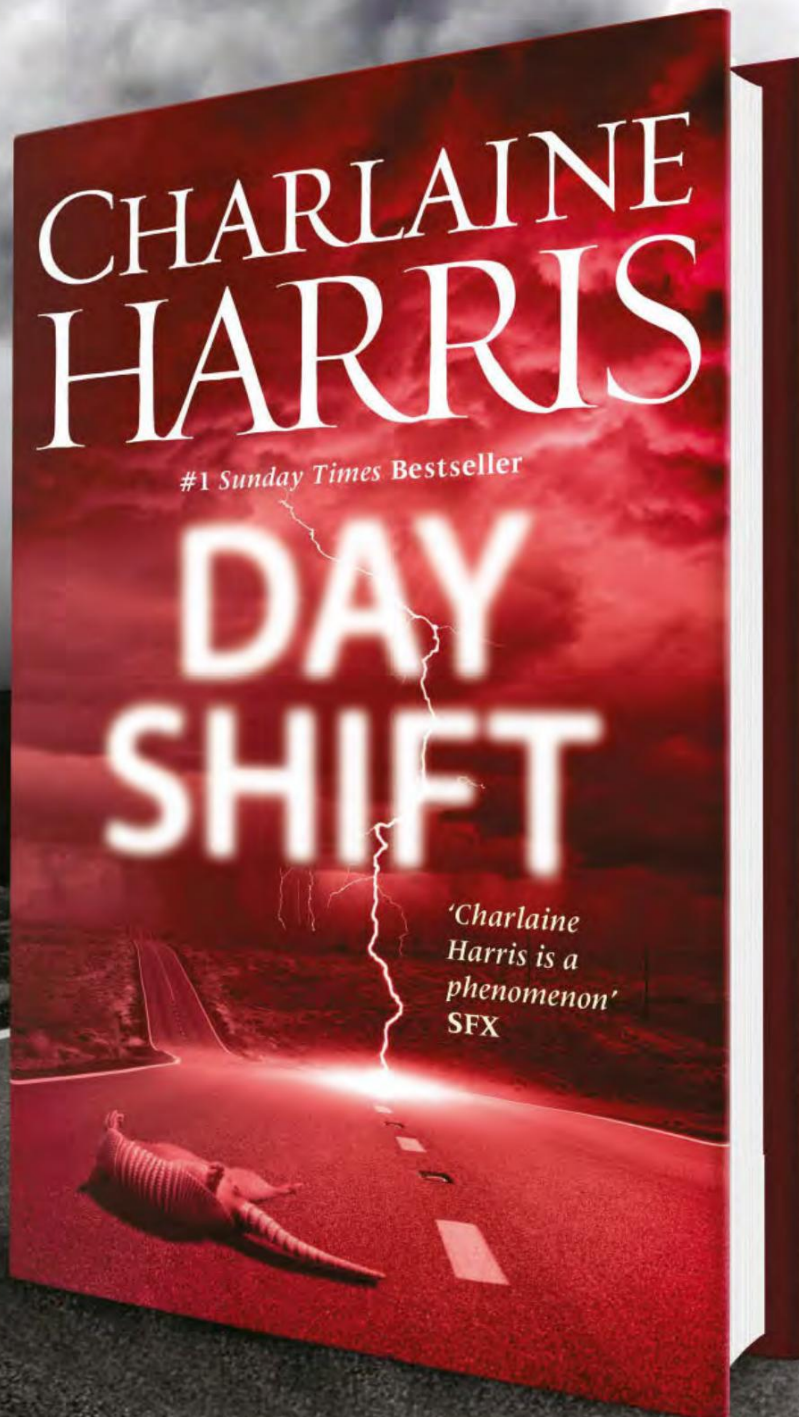
**SFX** Next issue on sale Wednesday 27 May 2015

Postal address: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA • Editorial email: [sfx@futurenet.com](mailto:sfx@futurenet.com)  
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*The Daily Mail*



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# RED ALERT

THE FUTURE FIRST

edited by Jordan Farley



## 12 DEMON DAYS

Further down  
the spiral with  
*Insidious*  
Chapter 3.



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Bryan Hitch  
helms DC's new  
Justice League  
comic book.



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Tim Minchin's  
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musical is heading  
to Broadway.

## POLTERGEIST

# Indian Summer

They're here... *Monster House* director  
resurrects *Poltergeist* on the big screen

**H**ORROR REMAKES GET a bad rap. *The Fog*, *Halloween*, *A Nightmare On Elm Street* and their like may deserve a brutal butchering in the woods at the hands of some masked maniac, but *The Fly*, *The Ring*, *The Thing* and many more besides prove there's often new life in old frights.

The latest classic horror to take up residence on remake lane is iconic '80s chiller *Poltergeist*, with *City Of Ember*'s Gil Kenan filling in for erstwhile ghost wrangler Tobe Hooper in the director's chair. But

rather than simply update the original film's ropey effects and languid pacing, it's the tale itself that was ripe for re-exploration according to Kenan.

"Ultimately it's a great story. It's the perfect expression of how the things we take most for granted – the kitchens where we cook, the bedrooms where we sleep – become a playground for horror," Kenan tells Red Alert during the final few weeks of post-production on the film. "Those elements in the original *Poltergeist* were what first got me excited about making movies." ➔





**SCI-FACT!**  
The original *Poltergeist* was filmed on the same street as *ET*.

He tried to keep his face neutral as he realised he'd left his porn collection out again.

# HOME DISCOMFORTS

More tales from the dark side

## LEGEND OF ZELDA

**1** How do you replace the legendary Zelda Rubinstein as Tangina? According to Kenan, you don't. "We didn't try to reinterpret Tangina. It was one of the first decisions I made, because so much of Tangina was the magic of Zelda. Jared [Harris] occupies a similar role, but in some ways we really had to beef up the character, not just of Carrigan Burke, but of the academic played by Jane Adams, to create a charge that could give the film the jolt of adrenaline it needs at that point."

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

**2** "I saw [*Poltergeist*] in the mid-1980s. I watched it on my own on VHS as a kid and felt the same thrill that many of the kids in my circumstance did, which was a feeling of absolute clarity of the environment in which the film takes place to my own experience. Obviously it was stylised and it's fun and funny, but it had such a ring of authenticity that it made the dark turn the story takes that much more terrifying. It left an indelible mark."

## HORROR SHOW

**3** Do films need gore to be scary? "I certainly don't feel so now, but I will say the thing I aspired to when I was a kid was to be a special effects make-up artist. So I have that part in me; that thrill at seeing gore on screen. But I never felt the movies that made the biggest impact on me were gory. All of them were scary because of suspense woven by the storyteller. I'm much more thrilled by a tightly-wound experience than I am by entrails and brains splattering across the floor."

## ORIGIN STORY

**4** As a fan of the original, what was it that Kenan thought he could improve on? "The originals were almost a deterrent at the beginning because they had been created so well... and so for me it was a much greater challenge to have to find my own creative spark. And luckily that came quite quickly in starting to work with David Lindsay-Albair, the screenwriter and with Sam Raimi as producer. I found that once that spark had been generated it was much smoother going."



She always got over-emotional putting the kids to bed.



Never push towards a wall of disembodied hands, kids. Just never.



It's possible she was overreacting to the new energy-saving lightbulb.



Is there anyone left who finds clowns funny and not terrifying?



Having made his name with animated horror comedy *Monster House*, *Poltergeist's* similarly domestic setting begs the question: does Kenan have a thing for haunted houses? "Specifically I have a thing for domesticated horror and generally I have a thing for houses!" Kenan enthuses, a jovial presence even on the other end of a crackly transatlantic phone line. "There is nothing more potent than the idea of walls having a story to tell. In any story that I get excited about there is some essential component connected to the history of the place."

The original film was a sequel-spawning smash in 1982, so much so that it's generated its own legend in the years since – did Steven Spielberg really direct it? Was the set cursed? And what's with the *Alien* poster on the kids' wall? Naturally Kenan thought long and hard before taking on *Poltergeist's* mantle. "I had every trepidation about making it. To a certain extent that anxiety is still there, although it is totally mitigated by the feeling I've honoured at least the expectations of myself as a *Poltergeist* fan. And hopefully we've also created new characters and new scares that can join the original trilogy as a reminder that homes are terrifying, dangerous places and you should never let your guard down!"

The film retains the original's suburban setting, but rather than the idyllic homestead of the '80s, the suburbs are now the reluctant destination for downwardly mobile big city family the Bowens, who have everyday hardships to deal with alongside Indian burial grounds and an influx of dimension hopping child snatchers.

"There was a cultural moment in the early '80s – the idea of the suburbs as the place every good, hard-working family should strive for was something that was irresistible for filmmakers to poke holes in. Having grown up in those same suburbs at the time those films were coming out they spoke directly to me. I was intrigued by the prospect of placing

## "Hopefully it can be a reminder that homes are terrifying places"

characters into this challenging environment from the beginning of our story, and it does end up reframing their relationship with this place. Watching those results play out was thrilling."

Much like the *Freelings*, the *Bowens* are a five-person family, with dad Eric (*Moon's* Sam Rockwell), mum Amy (Rosemarie DeWitt) and a trio of young 'uns (Saxon Sharbino, Kennedy Clements and Kyle Catlett), all of whom have subtly different roles thanks to the family's new circumstances, particularly middle child Griffin. "It was important for me that Griffin has the eyes and ears of the audience. Especially as we first discover this space and get a sense that there's something beneath the surface we should be more concerned about. The one role that is most analogous to the original is the pure soul of the youngest daughter, Madison, in our film, the one who is most susceptible to the influence of the spirit."

Rockwell kicked up a controversy earlier this year after describing the film as "more of a kids' movie", so will it be scary? "If you ask Sam he'll say that the words were bent and shaped and used out of context," says Kenan. "I don't want to do the same thing, but I will say what Sam's told me he meant is the film takes time to allow the awareness and the terror of the journey to dawn, and that we have this opportunity to slightly lower the camera, bring it below the height of an adult to wander the halls and discover the dark nooks of this house. For me that's a more exciting way to discover an environment, so I greedily took it and made the most of it." **SFX**

*Poltergeist* haunts cinemas from 22 May.





INSIDIOUS: CHAPTER 3

# No Ordinary Family

Saw writer returns to the Further for a paranormal prequel

**H**ORROR SEQUELS OFTEN suffer from the law of diminishing returns. After all, there are only so many times a make-up-caked spook can leap out of the shadows before scares turn into yawns. *Insidious: Chapter 2* was different – a horror sequel that was madder, more unsettling and in many ways better than its predecessor. But rather than rest on its laurels, the series is shaking things up with a threequel that delves into the past featuring a new family, a new entity and a very much alive paranormal investigator Elise Rainier.

“We’re going back before the first film and meeting Elise at a very different stage of her life,” writer/director Leigh Whannell tells Red Alert. “She’s this amazing psychic who

has hung up her spurs and is living as a hermit after losing her husband. She’s drawn back into the world of the supernatural by a young girl called Quinn who has lost her mother to cancer and is desperate to get in touch with her.”

*Insidious* stood out in a crowded market thanks to its distinctively batty, Giallo-inspired otherworld the Further, where tortured souls ensnare anyone with the ability to enter their realm. Set three years before the first *Insidious*, the film focuses on the Brenners, who find themselves terrorised by a demon known only as The Man Who Can’t Breathe. “Quinn (Stefanie Scott) is at a crossroads in her life after the death of her mother. She’s a lost soul, which makes her vulnerable,” Whannell says. “She has a dad



(Dermot Mulroney), who’s busy trying to raise two kids, but they’ve been dysfunctional since they lost the deep anchor of the family. Hopefully audiences will embrace the Brenner family in the way they embraced the Lamberts.”

The film also deals with the first encounter between Elise (Lin Shaye) and her supernatural assistants Specs (Whannell himself) and Tucker (Angus Sampson). “You see their world before the first film,” Whannell explains. “They’re amateur ghost hunters with a web series so they haven’t had any actual experience, so Elise brings them into that world and they help bring her back to life. To me it’s a film about two people who are dead inside and seeing them come back to life.”

Having written the first two films in the series, Whannell stepped up to direct for the first time with *Chapter 3*, replacing James Wan, who was shooting *Fast And Furious 7*



AERIAL  
ASSAULT  
SF TV ROUND UP



This new AA meeting  
wasn't really what  
she'd expected.

NEWBIES

- ▶ It's official: **THE X-FILES** will return as a six-episode event series. Duchovny and Anderson are on board.
  - ▶ E4 greenlights **ALIENS**, from *In The Flesh* writer Fintan Ryan. The channel's parallel universe comedy pilot *Alt* to be rebooted as **TRIPPED**.
  - ▶ *Walking Dead* spin-off gets a title: **FEAR THE WALKING DEAD**.
  - ▶ Stan Lee writing superhero show **LUCKY MAN** for Sky 1.
  - ▶ ABC creating **AGENTS OF SHIELD** spin-off.
  - ▶ A&E bringing **LET THE RIGHT ONE IN** to TV.
  - ▶ Ben Affleck and Matt Damon's future-set spy drama **INCORPORATED** gets a pilot at Syfy.
  - ▶ George RR Martin developing *Twilight Zone*-like **CAPTAIN COSMOS** for HBO.
  - ▶ **THE MORTAL INSTRUMENTS** will continue on the small screen as *Shadowhunters*.
  - ▶ Eighties-set supernatural mystery series **MONTAUK** heading to Netflix.
  - ▶ **ROBOT overlords** TV show will explore the film/book's robot occupied Earth.
- Continued on p15.*

MY SCI-FI

David Greenwalt

The *Buffy* producer and *Angel* co-creator now makes the dark magic of *Grimm*



FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY FILM

▶ *Creature From The Black Lagoon*, *Invaders From Mars*, *Forbidden Planet*... I was very much a fan of '50s science fiction. They all seemed kind of seminal. I guess you wouldn't put *Psycho* in that batch, but it was terrifying. Murdering Janet Leigh early in the film... Hitchcock did so many things where you were like, "This movie might do anything." You didn't know what it would do next. That's my favourite film. And certainly *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY TV

▶ *Buffy* and *Angel* of course! [laughs] I wasn't a big horror, sci-fi guy until I met Joss Whedon and discovered the metaphors that you can do in genre. For example, you can have an Invisible Girl who feels so invisible that she actually turns invisible, which you couldn't do in a so-called "normal" story. People can relate to that on a very deep level and yet they're removed from it at the same time. Of course I like *The Outer Limits* and *The Twilight Zone* – where, again, anything could happen. I liked *The Dead Zone* a lot too. Anthony Michael Hall sniffed around *Grimm*. We settled on David Giuntoli, for the part, but he's a great guy, a really nice guy...

FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY BOOKS

▶ Anything by Stephen King... The guys I grew up with were Vonnegut and a guy named Richard Brautigan, who nobody knows any more. But he was a big deal in the '60s and early '70s and he wrote a book called *Trout Fishing In America*. When I went to college I found that I was attracted to these writers who were funny and original and fresh, but they weren't really studied in academia. That's when I realised, "I'm probably a showbiz guy." The stuff that I liked was a little more entertaining.

*Season four of Grimm airs Wednesdays on Watch.*

"When it comes to  
modern horror films,  
James is the master"

at the time. But did Whannell turn to his frequent collaborator for advice?

"No, not really, he was in Dubai telling Vin Diesel to jump out of a building! But he did visit the set. I was shooting a ghost who was walking towards the camera and James leaned over and whispered to me, 'Have the ghost actor walk backwards and then run it in reverse, it will look really inhuman.' And it was like sitting on the set of a thriller and having Alfred Hitchcock lean over. When it comes to modern horror films, James is the master. So I did that, and of course I tried to pass it off to the crew as my own idea. He saw the movie and he was proud of me. It's been such a great experience. I'm sure the next film I make will be terrible, but this went as good as a film can go." **SFX**

*Insidious: Chapter 3 is released on 5 June.*

"I saw Ridley [Scott] a month ago,  
and not a peep was uttered from  
his mouth about it, and so I left  
it alone."

Sounds like Sean Young won't be showing up in  
*Blade Runner 2*.

DON'T QUOTE ME

SCI-FACT!

The first *Insidious* was the  
most profitable film of 2011.





**SCI-FACT!**  
*Bad Land* was called *Young Ones across the Pond* – not to be confused with the classic Rik Mayall comedy.

The long, sad look of teenagers asked to help out with chores.

## BAD LAND: ROAD TO FURY

# Dust To Dust

## FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

### The Michael Shannon cyber Western

#### IT'S A "WHAT IF" WESTERN

**1** At least climate change is good for something – providing intriguing storytelling inspiration for filmmakers. Take writer/director Jake Paltrow's peculiar, sci-fi infused Western, *Bad Land: Road To Fury*, which shows a future western United States where water is a rare commodity for people like farmer Ernest Holm and his kids. Oddly enough, it's their reliance on a mechanical robotic horse to survive the elements that proves to be the centrepiece of this pulpy drama. "It all felt like a combination of things we hadn't seen," Paltrow tells Red Alert. "The social issues and political background in the movie was what I was interested in, so inserting a classical structure and landscape into this future felt like something I wanted to see myself."

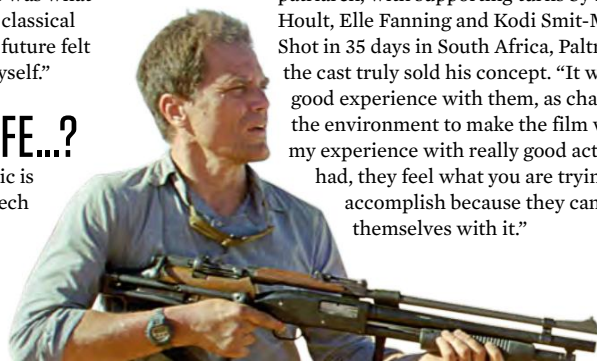
#### IS THIS THE REAL LIFE...?

**2** Paltrow's overall aesthetic is classic Western yet the tech is so futuristic that

audiences will often be surprised, which was the director's objective. "I wanted the film to have a storybook nature to it even though I wanted the performances and the feeling of living in the environment to be naturalistic, I didn't necessarily want it all to feel real," he explains. "Trying to find the difference between naturalistic and realistic and getting into the science fiction, I wanted to find a balance."

#### A FAMILY AFFAIR

**3** Despite its low-budget origins, Paltrow's yarn was strong enough to attract an impressive cast led by former *Zod* Michael Shannon as the Holm patriarch, with supporting turns by Nicholas Hoult, Elle Fanning and Kodi Smit-McPhee. Shot in 35 days in South Africa, Paltrow says the cast truly sold his concept. "It was a very good experience with them, as challenging as the environment to make the film was. From my experience with really good actors like we had, they feel what you are trying to accomplish because they can align themselves with it."



## NEW WORLDS

**4** While most of the film takes place in an arid desert, there are some sequences, like when Ernest's son Jerome (Smit-McPhee) crosses into another state, where tech is everywhere creating a visceral alternate way of life. "He's in a world that has regressed terribly in every way," Paltrow explains of the Holms' bleak ranch. "Going across the border and seeing that the state next door has an endless water supply created through this fictional atomic process where they are smashing hydrogen and water atoms together in these giant refineries is there to show this is the exact opposite of what the boy is living through."

## A HORSE WITH NO NAME

**5** Ernest is able to exist in the desert because he can transport and trade water with the well drillers via his robotic carrier machine. In essence, it's just a mechanical beast of burden but it ends up engendering a strange sympathy from the family and audience. "It doesn't have to be sentient for it to be an emotional experience," Paltrow smiles. "I like the idea of having something that you are imbuing with all the things you need from it, and you imagine you are getting something back from it in your mind. The thing is blamed for a terrible crime but it can't speak for itself so there is something beautiful and sad about it." **SFX**

*Bad Land: Road To Fury* is in cinemas from 1 May and on DVD/on demand from 4 May.



AFTERLIFE #103

# Shane Rimmer

Scott Tracy in *Thunderbirds*



**P**ROLIFIC CANADIAN character actor Shane Rimmer has brought to life numerous colourful personalities during his six decades in the business, making appearances in such classics as *Dr Strangelove*, *Star Wars*, the original *Superman* films and, more recently, *Batman Begins*. However, it was lending his distinctly gravelly vocals to senior brother Scott Tracy in Gerry Anderson's classic 1960s marionette TV series *Thunderbirds* that he is best remembered for. We spoke to Shane at his home in Potter's Bar.

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY THE ROLE AGAIN?

► Sure! I enjoyed doing it. The character had enough life in him and enough variation to make him pretty interesting. I'd be quite happy to do it again.

## WHAT'S THE STRANGEST REQUEST YOU'VE HAD FROM A FAN?

► I was once asked whether I had any mementos from Canada that I would like to pass on. I had a little fur piece – I think it was from a beaver, which was kind of a mascot for Canada.

## WOULD ANY OF SCOTT TRACY'S SKILLS OR ATTRIBUTES HAVE BEEN USEFUL IN REAL LIFE?

► I think Scott was a pretty resourceful fellow and very alert. He seemed to be able to handle situations pretty well. Most things happened rather rapidly – they would be out basking in the sun then suddenly there was an emergency call and they would have to jump into their craft and away they would go!

## IS THERE ANYTHING YOU THINK WAS UNFINISHED ABOUT SCOTT'S STORY?

► No, I think they pretty well exhausted all of his resources.

## DID YOU GET ANY SOUVENIRS FROM THE SET?

► No, but I can't tell you how many garbage cans I passed on the way out of recording sessions with discarded *Thunderbirds* parts and pieces!

## ANYTHING FROM *THUNDERBIRDS* YOU WISH WAS REAL?

► I've been intrigued by all the space flights – I doubt that I would ever take the opportunity to go up in one though!

## WHAT WOULD IT SAY ON THE CHARACTER'S GRAVESTONE?

► There was a great quote from Dorothy Walker, a writer for *The New Yorker*, and on her gravestone read: "Pardon my dust!"

## AERIAL ASSAULT SF TV ROUND UP



### NEWBIES

- Legendary bringing comic **LAZARUS** to TV.
- Wes Craven adapting Steve Niles' upcoming, space-based horror comic **THE DISCIPLES** for Universal.
- Miramax and writer Ehren Kruger turning Terry Gilliam's **BROTHERS GRIMM** into a TV show.
- *Supernatural*'s Eric Kripke creating comic/TV show **AMPED** about a family man who develops superpowers.
- **SUSPIRIA** TV show in the works. *Pushing Daisies*' Bryan Fuller wants the gig.

### SHOWRUNNING

- David Lynch drops out of **TWIN PEAKS** season three over budget issues.
- Steven Moffat says there will be at least five more years of **DOCTOR WHO**.
- **SLEEPY HOLLOW** gets a third season order and new showrunner Clifton Campbell.
- Nina Dobrev leaving **THE VAMPIRE DIARIES** at the end of season six.
- **THE LAST MAN ON EARTH** renewed for a second season at Fox.

Continued on p19.

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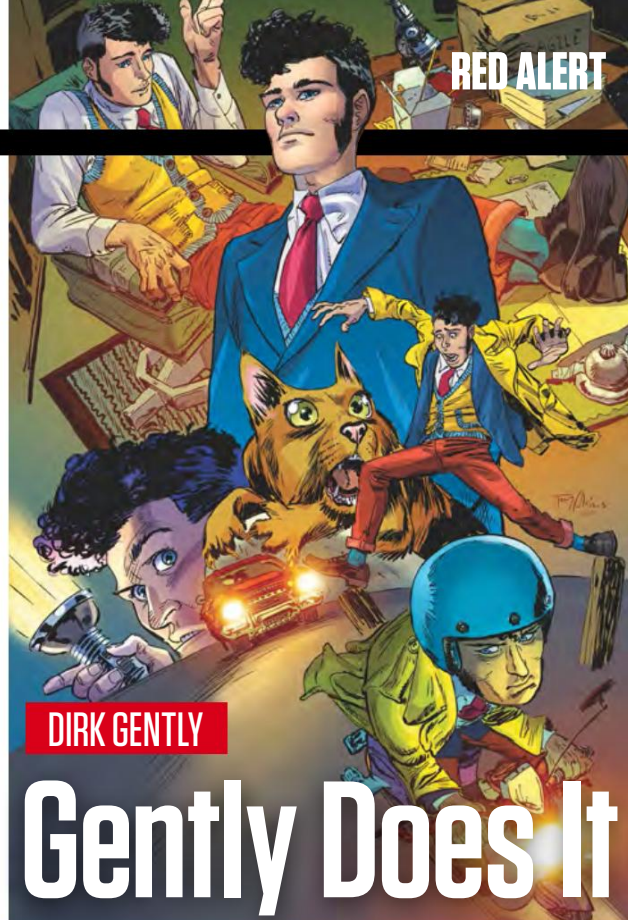
DON'T QUOTE ME

"They said my head was too big and my body was like a broomstick. I can take anything. It's just empty talk."

Names won't hurt Wonder Woman Gal Gadot.

### SCI-FACT!

Douglas Adams was writing the third *Dirk Gently* novel, *The Salmon Of Doubt*, at the time of his death.



## Douglas Adams' Holistic Detective comes to comics

**W**ITH HIS FIRST NOVEL appearing in 1987, Dirk Gently has never been as popular as Douglas Adams' other well-known creation, *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*. But that could be about to change as IDW Entertainment and Ideate are developing a new US television adaptation starring the holistic detective – who solves cases by figuring out the interconnectedness of all things – with *Chronicle*'s Max Landis acting as showrunner. But before then, IDW Editor-in-Chief Chris Ryall is penning a new five-part comics series, which will play into the proposed small-screen version.

"It wouldn't be Dirk without a connection, even if no one but Dirk can actually see that connection," Ryall tells *Red Alert*. "The plan for the TV show is to set it in San Diego, so the comic does the same. It's a lot of fun to set the comic here and not only because it's about as fish-out-of-water a place for Dirk as I can imagine him being. And there might even be a Dirk at Comic-Con special issue at some point."

With his long overcoat and bequipped hairstyle, it has been mentioned that artist Tony Akins' depiction of Dirk bears a resemblance to David Tennant's incarnation of the Doctor, which IDW published before current *Who* comics licence holders Titan took over. "I'm sure at some point, time travel will rear its head once again," teases Ryall. "You can also expect a very angry and jealous god and a familiar face from one of the books

in a very different role." **SFX**

*Dirk Gently's Holistic Agency #1* is published in May.





**SCI-FACT!**  
Bryan Hitch previously  
drew the Justice League  
for DC between  
2000 and 2001.

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

# The Big League

Team player Bryan Hitch takes on the JLA

**S**UPERSTAR ARTIST BRYAN Hitch returns to DC Comics this June. And he's onboard to write and draw flagship title *Justice League Of America*, the team book that unites the biggest hitters in the DC Universe.

"[Publishers] Dan DiDio and Jim Lee had often talked to me about coming over to do something," Hitch tells Red Alert. "A couple of summers back I was on holiday and after I'd declined the latest offer of project and writer Dan said 'Okay, wise guy – what would you do?'"

"You can never tell when lightning strikes but for whatever reason I instantly sat down and wrote a one-page... something. Outline? Pitch? Idea? I didn't think much more about it but I sent it to Dan, who said we should lock it in and do it as a *JLA* relaunch. Eventually we made a deal and last summer I started writing the eight issues of the first story arc."

Hitch reveals that the core appeal is a personal one. "It was a favourite growing up," he says. "Much as Superman was the guy for me,

*JLA* had all of them in... Growing up on only DC books, it had the widest possible appeal. If you only get one DC book, it's got to have them all in it, otherwise what's the point?"

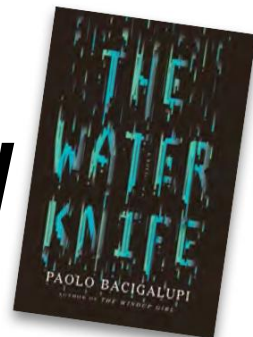
So what kind of stories does Hitch want to tell? "They have to be immense ideas, vast threats," he shares. "They have to be things none of them could sort out on their own. And given their respective reputations and power levels, that's only the biggest possible threats. If it was only that, though, it might be dull, so I want to be able to put the characters in unusual situations, challenge their principles and beliefs somewhat. It's not just about the cool shots and fights. It has to be about something too."

"If anything I feel I'm channelling the classic DC as that's my emotional touchstone for these guys. I'm not aiming for nostalgia in any way, though, so I'm just doing what I think I do best and trying to take a modern approach to what I'm doing." **SFX**

*Justice League Of America* is out on 17 June.

THE WATER KNIFE

## Scarcity Values



Paolo Bacigalupi tells us about his new eco-thriller



● Before he became a full-time novelist, Paolo Bacigalupi worked at an environmental magazine, *High Country News*. Here, his colleagues included journalists looking at "climate change and water scarcity in the Colorado River basin", reporting that inspired Bacigalupi's 2006 short story, "The Tamarisk

Hunter". "That was the first time I seriously went after climate change as a science fiction topic," he says.

There things might have rested, except that Bacigalupi became concerned about what he sees as "an amazing strain of climate-change denialism here in the US, an almost religious ferocity". As Bacigalupi returned to the topic of how water in the western US is being over-exploited, the short story helped to provide the inspiration for his new novel, near-future eco-thriller *The Water Knife*.

The title refers to an agent, Angel, charged with securing contested water supplies. He's a thug, but not portrayed unsympathetically. That's deliberate on Bacigalupi's part.

"In most historical situations where there's a lot of pressure put on people, whether those are wars, moments of ethnic cleansing, natural disasters, or political upheaval, you see people reacting in a wide variety of ways," he says. "Some people turn into monsters, some turn into saints. I'm not sure that any of us knows for certain what kind of person we would become."

There's already a real buzz about the book, which is unsurprising when you consider that Bacigalupi's debut, *The Windup Girl* (2009), took Nebula and Hugo Awards. Subsequently, though, Bacigalupi has written four YA books. Partly, Bacigalupi says, that's because his YA publisher was "very open" to ideas; and partly because he wanted to talk to young people "about where we're headed". Plus using "different creative muscles" has helped him improve as a writer: "I learned a lot about plot and pacing that I didn't know from my adult work, and that in turn means that *The Water Knife* is a tighter, more gripping thriller." **SFX**

*The Water Knife* will be published by Orbit on Thursday 28 May.



STAR TURN

# Alan Tudyk

The former *Firefly* behind crowd-funded web comedy *Con Man*

## THE WRAY FORWARD

▶ “*Con Man* follows my character, Wray Nerely – a struggling actor who goes to conventions and is trying to rebrand himself. He starred in *Spectrum* and thought it would lead to success, like his friend Jack Moore played by Nathan Fillion, but he makes some bad career choices and gets pigeon-holed. I drew from my own experience as an actor and in the convention world. Sometimes it gets very close to reality.”

## BLURRING THE LINES

▶ “What’s fun is you can have sci-fi actors playing a version of themselves and then also playing different roles. Gina Torres will play a director, for example. It’ll be fun for sci-fi fans who know the backstory of all these characters and the mythology that follows them.”

## FAN FICTION

▶ “We crowdfunded *Con Man* to make sure we got it right. The fans created the world. The fans taught me about conventions. I came into them right after *Firefly* not really knowing anything. So we were hopeful that we could do it with them, and this has been beyond what we had hoped.”

## BACK IN THE DRIVER’S SEAT

▶ “One of the reasons to do this was to get me and Nathan back in a spaceship. We have a show within the show, but it isn’t a space Western. In *Spectrum*, it’s a much grander world, almost like *Battlestar Galactica* in that they’re fighting to save the universe. I play a character named Cash, he’s the pilot and Nathan is the captain but we didn’t want to populate the crew with the *Firefly* cast because it won’t be as good as *Firefly*! But we have fun stuff. Amy Acker’s going to be on the spaceship.”

## WORDS OF WHEDON

▶ “At the very beginning, I told [Joss] my idea and he said, ‘It sounds great. Whatever you do, don’t make fun of the fans.’ I hadn’t planned to, but it has been some guiding advice. Tim Minear’s read everything and has been very supportive. Those are people I look up to. It’s given me the confidence to say to the fans, ‘Hey, help me make this. Let’s do this together.’”

*Con Man* films in June and will be released later this year.





**SCI-FACT!**  
*Pixels* is based on a superb  
 2010 short by Patrick Jean:  
<http://bit.ly/PixelsSFX>.

RELEASE DATE  
**12 AUG  
 2015**

# FREEZE FRAME

THIS MONTH:  
 Arcade characters  
 attack Earth in  
 blockbuster action  
 comedy **Pixels**



● Sending time capsules into space is fine and dandy until aliens misinterpret footage of arcade games as a declaration of war...



● *Galaga*'s tractor beam ships are re-purposed here as Galaxian-dispensing troop carriers.



● Everything the aliens touch turns to pixels. Or voxels if you want to be picky.



● A gargantuan Pac-Man has his fill of fire engines on the streets of New York.



● Your eyes do not deceive you – that is a tiny Q\*bert at the bottom there. Bet he's a pushover.



● Donkey Kong takes centre stage, but there's no Jumpman in sight.



● Adam Sandler's Sam Brenner and Kevin James' US President (!) put their misspent gaming youths to use saving the world.



● *Centipede* attack! Good job Michelle Monaghan's weapons specialist is on hand with firearms to take down the invaders.



● How do you take down a 20ft Pac-Man? With ghost-mobiles! And big ol' guns mounted on the top, natch.



● Peter Dinklage plays the mullet-sporting childhood nemesis of Sam. Think *The King Of Kong*.



● No major landmark is safe from an *Alleyway* onslaught.



● *Pac-Man* creator Toru Iwatani (well, an actor playing him) comes face to face with his "son". It doesn't end well.

## THE BUZZ

**RICH**



I love the premise – Donkey Kong reaping carnage with barrels? Yay! – but the tone of this trailer is all over the place. *Pixels* needs to be a hell of a lot funnier if it's going to sustain an entire film.

**DAVE**



I adore the concept (*Pac-Man* and *Donkey Kong* are games from my youth) but the trailer is more slapstick and Adam Sandler-y than I was expecting. Still, it's got Peter Dinklage in it.

**ALEX**



Adam Sandler should be given the occasional chance, just so he can squander it again and we can all move on. Thus *Pixels*, a silly movie about voxels with cringeworthy lines. No!

**JORDAN**



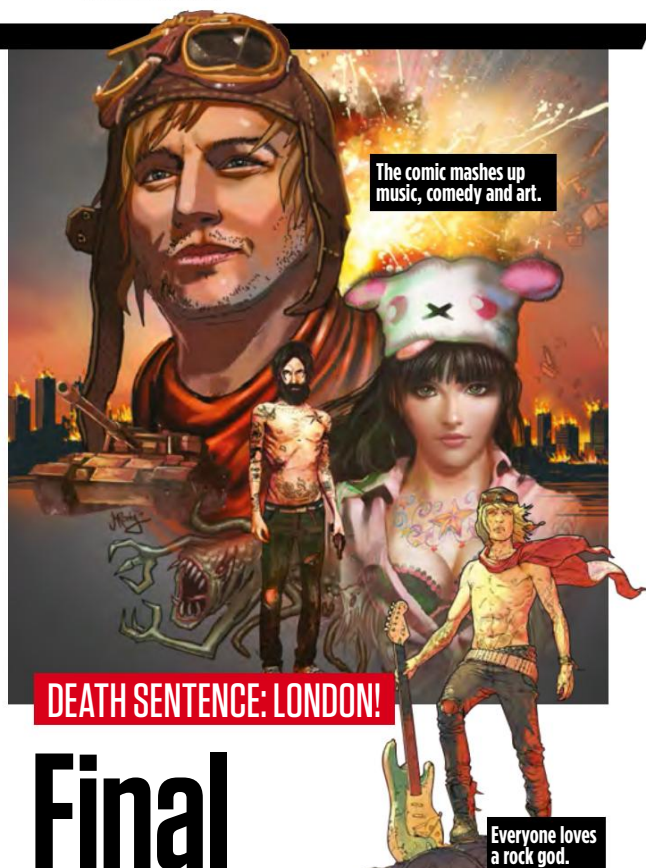
Great concept, but shame the trailer isn't the strongest. With Chris Columbus at the helm I've got high hopes for a smarter line of humour than Adam Sandler inanely naming characters.

**RHIAN**



It's a concept that just looks like *So Much Fun!* The casting seems to be a mix of "amazing!" and "okay..." so let's hope Chris Columbus can make it all work – this is looking good.





DEATH SENTENCE: LONDON!

# Final Countdown

The last word on superheroes continues

**W**HAT WOULD YOU DO WITH THE rest of your life?" With its central trio given only six months to live after developing superpowers thanks to the sexually transmitted G-Plus virus, *Death Sentence's* high concept perfectly fitted its initial six-issue span. But according to author Monty Nero, there's so much more to tell as Verity, Wessel and Monty are returning in new ongoing monthly, *Death Sentence: London*.

"To start with, we learn more about them, as they become more powerful and dangerous," reveals Nero, who will be joined by artist Martin Simmonds. "So we'll see the effect of the virus on the wider population, and the American response with new characters like Jeb Mulgrew, an undercover FBI agent."

As the subtitle indicates, the English capital is at the heart of the story. "There's a lot of stuff influenced by the London riots, and some new characters such as a London mayor you may recognise," says Nero, who will also look at the wider global picture. "We've always got multiple threads interweaving so events in London are intercut with what's happening elsewhere as the virus proliferates."

With Weasel resembling Peter Doherty, Nero will continue to mesh pop culture with superhero action. "It's about our culture, our values, and our lives," he explains. "We live in crazy times, and superpowers are simply a fun way to talk about it." **SFX**

*Death Sentence: London #1* is published by Titan Comics on Wednesday 10 June.

## SF TV ROUND UP

### AERIAL ASSAULT



### CASTING CALL

► *Game Of Thrones'* Maise Williams (Arya Stark) to guest star in an episode of **DOCTOR WHO** series nine.

► **PREACHER** adds *Misfits'* Joe Gilgun as Cassidy and Ruth Negga as Tulip. Ian Colletti also signs up as Arseface.

► *Da Vinci's Demons'* Kieran Bew will play **BEOWULF** for ITV.

► **CONTINUUM** enlists *Helix's* Kyra Zagorsky as a future soldier sent back to fight Keira for the final season.

► Kathy Bates, Wes Bentley, Chloe Sevigny and Matt Bomer all check into **AMERICAN HORROR STORY: HOTEL**, but Jessica Lange won't be back for season five.

► *Heroes'* Hiro, Masi Oka, and The Haitian, Jimmy Jean-Louis, will return for **HEROES REBORN**.

► Chris Cooper and *Dracula Untold's* Sarah Gadon join Stephen King adap **11/22/63**.

► Arthur Darvill joins the cast of **THE FLASH/ARROW** spin-off as time-travelling adventurer Rip Hunter.

► David Hewlett to guest star as a sleazy agent in *Stargate* writers' new show **DARK MATTER**.

© BBC (1)

DON'T QUOTE ME

"My instinct — and this is probably from years of doing *Doctor Who* — is I'm just such a tart. If people want to, we should give it to them."

Ask and ye shall receive from Steven "The Tart" Moffat.

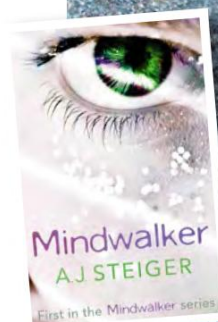
**SCI-FACT!**  
*Death Sentence* was originally serialised in Mark Millar's *Clint* magazine

## NEW AUTHOR

### AJ Steiger

The US writer's YA debut where traumatic memories can be erased

Amanda's book deals with issues like domestic terrorism and mental illness.



### WHAT WOULD YOU WRITE AS *MINDWALKER'S* COVER BLURB?

► If you could choose to erase your worst memory, would you? Seventeen-year-old Lain Fisher is a prodigy. She's already mastered the art of Mindwalking — using a neural link to delete her patients' traumatic memories. When Steven Bent, a troubled classmate, asks her to help him forget a horrific event from his childhood, Lain's superiors warn her to stay away from him. But she goes against orders... and soon realises that Steven is connected to something much bigger.

### HOW LONG DID YOU WORK ON IT?

► The idea first came to me about five years ago. Originally I wrote *Mindwalker* as an adult science fiction novel, then came back to it a few years later. I'd been reading a lot of Young Adult Fiction and I'd fallen in love with the genre, so I tried rewriting the book with the protagonist as a 17-year-old girl, and something clicked.

### WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT THE WORLD IN *MINDWALKER*?

► It's not set in a distant, remote future where civilisation has totally crumbled. It's a lot like our world. Many of the dystopian aspects of the society in *Mindwalker* — such as the National Registry of Mental Health — are ones that real-life political figures have actually suggested... which makes the world a bit more scarily plausible, I think.

### WHICH SF/FANTASY AUTHORS WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE COMPARED TO IN A DREAM REVIEW?

► Well, there are a lot of authors whose work I adore. I don't know that I'd want to be seen as the next Suzanne Collins or the next

Veronica Roth — I'd rather be the first me.

*Mindwalker* is published on 2 June by Rock The Boat.





**SCI-FACT!**  
Previous small-screen adaptation *Beyond Westworld* (1980) lasted just three episodes before being axed.

# SPOTLIGHT

**SPOILER WARNING!**

Welcome back to **Westworld** pardner, saddle up for an existential android crisis from HBO

## JUMP THE QUEUE...

► Book your tickets and your coffins now. The late Michael Crichton's dino theme park is already making a genetically modified comeback: now its android-staffed predecessor – *Westworld* – is about to have its circuits tweaked for HBO. Guests of the original park's Western area found themselves relentlessly pursued for real by a short-circuited bad-ass baldy gunslinger – think *The Terminator* meets *High Noon*. The experience was still better than Butlins.

## PARANOID ANDROIDS

► The new show is going to instead be focused on the droids who populate *Westworld*, programmed to help the guests live out whatever fantasy they – and their vacationing consciences (whatever happens in *Westworld* stays in *Westworld*) – want to experience. The quirk is that they don't know they're androids,

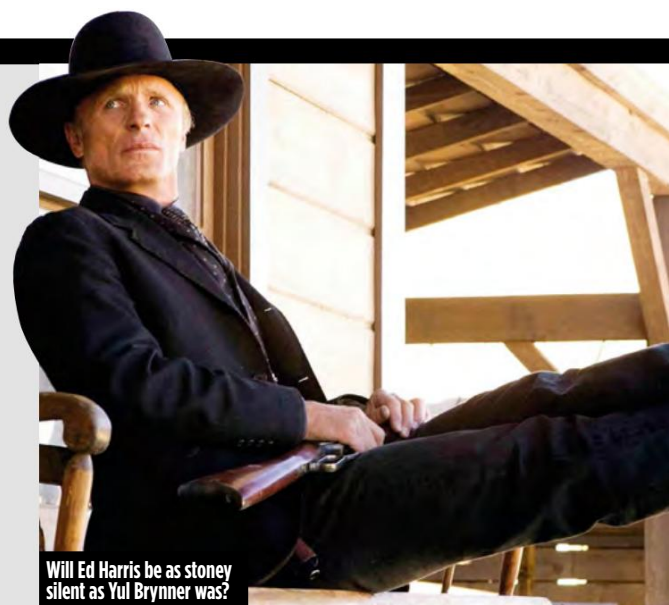
being reset after each visit has played out: yup, we're in *Dollhouse* territory here, with a huge existential dollop of *Blade Runner*.

## THE NOLAN BROTHER

► The philosophy of AI? Scientific soul-searching? Epic action? Sounds tailor-made for Jonathan Nolan – Christopher's brother and co-writer of *Interstellar* and *The Dark Knight* – who's writing and executive producing the show. His fellow *Westworld* producer is one JJ Abrams, and the show is operating under the usual Bad Robot shutthehellup levels of security: many Bothans died to bring you the following information...

## RANCH DRESSING

► Undergoing an existential crisis is cowgirl-next-door Dolores Abernathy and lovestruck pistolpacker Teddy Flood – played by Evan Rachel Wood and James Marsden. The pair



are forever destined to have a guest come between them, as love-rival Teddy must be defeated before the victor can see Dolores in the saddle. This pattern is stuck on repeat until Dolores uncovers the truth.

## THE MAN IN THE SKY

► The man behind Dolores, Teddy and the rest of *Westworld*'s menagerie of characters is Dr Robert Ford, played in a spectacular casting coup by Anthony Hopkins. Although, let's be serious, we're envisioning an episode nine Ned Stark-style exit for the expensive elderly legend.

Dr Ford isn't running *Westworld* on his tod. His backroom staff – complete with their own agendas and rivalries – are also supplying their share of drama: the team include Jeffrey Wright, as head of programming Bernard Lowe, and Miranda Otto as Virginia Pittman, the ambitious head of Quality Assurance, whose job title will be an oxymoron by the end of the series.

## BAD ROBOTS

► Semi-fleshing out *Westworld* for visitors are a whole cast of character-types for guests to interact with. These include locale madame Maeve Miller (Thandie Newton), her most popular attraction Clementine Pennyfeather (Angela Sarafyan) and bandits like Harlan Bell (Rodrigo Santoro). Don't expect to see too much of the other alternative worlds from the original movie – Ancient Rome, Medieval Europe, the Future – so HBO's blood-splattered *Rome* set will have to stay in mothballs.

## BALD, BLACK, BAD, BACK...

► Of course, the big question is whether the proto-T800 Man in Black is back, and we're not talking about Johnny Cash. And yes, the villainous gunslinger will be once again be talking trash and prompting gunfights in saloons across *Westworld*, with suitably slapheaded Ed Harris taking on the role made iconic by Yul Brynner. Get the boy a bib...

## WHEN TO EXPECT IT?

► *Westworld* will air from autumn 2015. **SFX**





ELECTRIC BOOGALOO

# Cannon Fodder

New doc digs into iconic film company

**A** METALLIC, GLEAMING hexagon, you'll probably recognise the logo for Cannon Films. You'll certainly know some of their movies – everything from *Superman IV* to *Masters Of The Universe*. And yet that is just the tip of the trash-berg for a company that made stars of everyone from Chuck Norris to Morgan Freeman.

"People said you were either in a Cannon Film on the way up or the way down," laughs Mark Hartley, director of new documentary *Electric Boogaloo: The Wild, Untold Story Of Cannon Films*. It follows Cannon during the period it was owned by Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus, Israeli cousins with big ambitions in the film industry.

While they've been dubbed forerunners of Harvey and Bob Weinstein, when it came to making films like *Lifeorce* and *Ninja III: The Domination*, Golan and Globus were never so bothered by quality control. "[Italian director] Luigi Cozzi told me the secretaries wrote the scripts!" grins Hartley.

Still, they managed the occasional classic – as with Andrei Konchalovsky's triple-Oscar

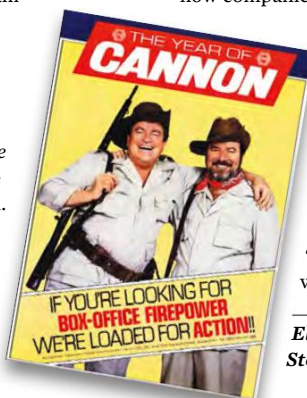
nominated *Runaway Train*, which, according to Hartley, is "Cannon's best film" – while their plans for Hollywood domination were ahead of the curve. "Cannon had the Spider-Man rights. They had the Captain America rights," Hartley notes. "But superhero movies were considered stuff of TV..."

It was only when they tried to extend themselves that it all came crashing down. "When I started working on it," says Hartley, "I thought the film would be a more inspirational David versus Goliath story. Ultimately, it became much more of a cautionary tale."

While the company clearly blazed a trail, now companies like Millennium are making

Cannon-like movies, such as *The Expendables* franchise.

"Half the cast are people from Cannon Films," says Hartley. Other protégés include producers David Womark (*Life Of Pi*) and Pieter Jan Brugge (*Heat*) – and Hartley reckons it's about time Cannon got its due. "Cinema would be a lesser place without them." **SFX**



*Electric Boogaloo: The Wild, Untold Story Of Cannon Films* opens 5 June.

## THE DEAD LANDS

# Myth Makers

Maori movie channels the Dark Knight

● The son of a Fijian father and an English mother, Toa Fraser enjoyed tales from both European and Pacific folklore as a child. Now the *Dean Spanley* director has channelled that heritage into *The Dead Lands*, a Maori martial arts movie that takes place in a mythical, pre-colonial New Zealand.

"Dad would tell us not only stories about Ulysses and Dakuwaqa, the Fijian shark god, but also ghost stories and legends from our own family that were painted in myth," he tells Red Alert. "We had a really strong connection to the spirit world that was a real part of our life and not something that you'd view as sort of spooky."

With its elaborate fight sequences, *The Dead Lands* has been compared to *Apocalypto* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, although Fraser adopted a more earthy approach. "More than anything that was a touchstone to push against," he argues. "I loved the elegance, grace and magical mysticism of *Crouching Tiger*'s wire-work but, for me, *The Dead Lands* was all about getting away from wires and doing something that had a foot in the spirit world. That kind of natural relationship between the mortal and immortal worlds is still very real to us in the Pacific. At the same time, I wanted it to feel very muscular and lean as I wanted to get my hands dirty."

Revealing that *Batman: Year One* was another reference point, Fraser believes that *The Warrior* (*Lord Of The Rings*' Lawrence Makoare) and Hongi (James Rolleston) are similar to Batman and Robin. "They're like the dynamic duo," he says. "The Warrior is like this vulnerable superhero, the guy who can get injured and is a sort of outcast living on the edge of a society in this very dank, dissolute kind of world." **SFX**

*The Dead Lands* is in cinemas and on demand from 29 May.

*The Dead Lands* will draw on Pacific folklore.





# IMAGE BANK

Nourishment for your optic nerves



## ALL MERC AND NO PLAY

**1** Ryan Reynolds' long-awaited *Deadpool* movie finally started filming in Vancouver last month. To mark the occasion (and prevent paps leaking the first look) Fox has released the first official shot

of Reynolds in costume as the Merc With A Mouth. In typical cheeky *Deadpool* fashion he's seen here recreating Burt Reynolds' notorious nude *Cosmo* shoot, fortunately with clothes on this time. *Deadpool* opens on 12 February 2016.

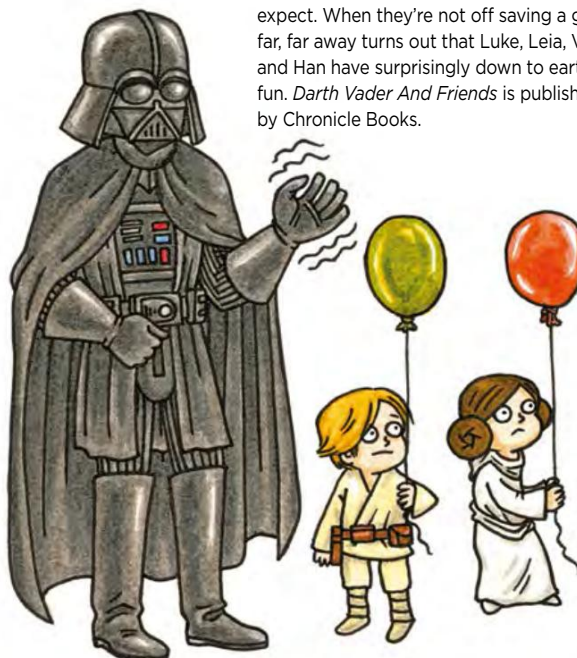


## JURASSIC BLOCKS

**2** Nowadays, any summer movie worth its salt comes with a range of Lego (well, they don't call them BLOCKbusters for nothing), so it's little surprise that this year's dino-revival *Jurassic World* is getting some brick-based sets to tie in with the film's release. Chris Pratt's Owen Grady features, alongside a collection of dinos; including the genetically engineered Indominus Rex (above). Forget the film, we've got a disaster-prone theme park to assemble.

## FRIENDS REUNITED

**3** The fourth and final book in Jeffrey Brown's bloomin' adorable series of illustrated *Star Wars* books, *Darth Vader And Friends*, releases on May the 4th and here's an exclusive glimpse at what you can expect. When they're not off saving a galaxy far, far away turns out that Luke, Leia, Vader and Han have surprisingly down to earth fun. *Darth Vader And Friends* is published by Chronicle Books.



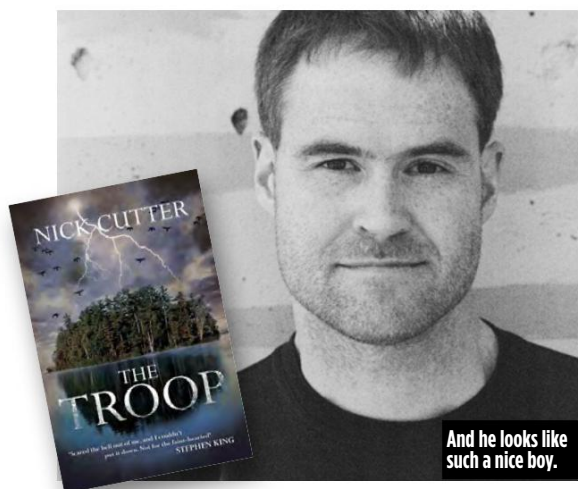
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## THE TROOP

# Tale Of The Tape

Nick Cutter bags the first James Herbert Award



● In *The Troop*, Nick Cutter's memorably messy 2014 novel, a group of scouts has an encounter with what can only be described as a mega-tapeworm. It's a disgusting, gripping slice of modern horror, and we can't help but think that legendary Brit horror author James Herbert would have approved – which is fitting, as *The Troop* has been named the winner of the first James Herbert Award for horror.

"Apparently it's a big glass rat, which I'm really excited to have," says Craig Davidson, the Canadian author behind the Nick Cutter pseudonym. "I feel incredibly grateful and fortunate. It's an award started by James Herbert and his family, and I've always felt like I have an affinity with James's writing. We share an aesthetic in some ways. We're like attack dogs, trying to swarm over people and scare them in a really intense way."

Davidson's career to date has been a predominantly literary affair, although genre was never far from the life-long horror aficionado's mind. "I did my master's degree in creative writing, and for my thesis they were not going to allow me, sadly, to write a vampire book," says Davidson. "Then I had this idea to write a genre horror novel, something that would fit in with the books I'd grown up reading."

The change in direction paid off, with *The Troop* beating out an impressive list of nominees to bag the prize. Now Davidson looks set to take full advantage of his new status as James Herbert Award winner...

"The new book, *The Deep*, is now out in the UK," he says. "It's not a linear follow up to *The Troop*, it's a totally different thing but also clearly horror. Then I've got a book called *The Acolyte* coming out, and then one called *Little Heaven*, which hasn't been picked up in the UK yet, but I'm hopeful." **SFX**

*The Troop* and *The Deep* are available now.

## NEWS WARP

ALL FACT, NO FILLER



### GAME OF THRONES

season five debuts to record ratings on both sides of the pond despite the first four episodes leaking online 24 hours before the season premiere.

### THE NOMINEES FOR THE 29th ARTHUR C. CLARKE AWARD

have been announced. The six shortlisted entries are: *The Girl With All The Gifts* (MR Carey), *The Book Of Strange New Things* (Michel Faber), *Europe In Autumn* (Dave Hutchinson), *Memory Of Water* (Emmi Itäranta), *The First Fifteen Lives Of Harry August* (Claire North) and *Station Eleven* (Emily St John Mandel). The winner will be announced on 6 May at an event in London.

▶ **GODZILLA** heading to hell in new comic book series from IDW.

▶ Michelle MacLaren drops out of directing **WONDER WOMAN** over "creative differences".

▶ *Guardians Of The Galaxy* co-writer Nicole Perlman and *Inside Out*'s Meg LeFauve in talks to script **CAPTAIN MARVEL**.

▶ No solo **HULK** movie until Universal give up the rights, according to Hulk actor Mark Ruffalo. Hulk smash!

© KEVIN KELLY (7), REX (5)

DON'T QUOTE ME

"Whatever a younger, leading man can do, I cannot only match him, I can do more! If he does 20 pull-ups, I can do 30 pull-ups. If he can do 100 push-ups, I can do 150 push-ups. Just keep that in mind."

Don't underestimate *Flash Gordon* actor Sam J Jones

### SCI-FACT!

Craig Davidson's also written several SF novels and short stories under the name Patrick Lestewka.

## RED ALERT

It's TBC on whether there'll be a shower scene in this version...



## GROUNDHOG DAY

# Stage Hog

Tim Minchin's musical set for repeat shows



### HAVING TURNED

Roald Dahl's *Matilda* into the best stage musical in decades, Australian tunes whinger Tim Minchin's next big stage project is a *Groundhog Day* musical, set to premiere on Broadway in March 2017.

Minchin, who has written the music and lyrics, has been working on the musical for over two years, and tells *SFX* that actors have already given the songs a thorough workout. Three of his *Matilda* collaborators – director Matthew Warchus, choreographer Peter Darling and set designer Rob Howell – are also on board the project.

"*Groundhog Day* is a tough ask," he admits of the unusual source material, the high concept 1993 comedy movie starring Bill Murray. "What we've made is very interesting and very dense and very funny. And certainly not a light fluffy night at the theatre. It gets dark. And it gets very romantic."

It was the film's redemptive theme that really fired his imagination: "This notion that wisdom is getting to a point of no longer being a narcissist and no longer aspiring for more. The point where you sit there and realise that everything you need in life is in front of you if you know how to look at it right. And at the point you figure that out you become loveable."

"I've loved making it. And of course I want people to come and see it and not prejudge it and not bring too much baggage from the movie. But in the end you can only make something that you'd want to see, and so far, I've made something I'd really like to see." **SFX**

*Groundhog Day: The Musical* will premiere on Broadway on Thursday 9 March 2017.





# NICK SETCHFIELD'S DEVELOPMENT HELL

Your monthly glimpse into Hollywood's hoped-for future

## THE MARK OF MILLAR! JUPITER'S LEGACY

► *Kingsman* and *Kick-Ass* creator **Mark Millar** continues his one-man invasion of Hollywood. He's now teaming with *Transformers* producer **Lorenzo di Bonaventura** on a movie version of his comic *Jupiter's Legacy*. Co-created with **Frank Quitely**, it's a multi-generational superhero tale, exploring the lives of superpowered offspring in the long, spandex-clad shadow of their parents. "What appealed to me was the emotional weight of the family dynamic in Shakespearean fashion," says di Bonaventura.

Millar says: "His plan is just seismic. The talent he's talking about behind the camera convinced me to relinquish the rights to my most treasured book and now I just can't wait to see where this goes." Millar's time-bending *Chrononauts* is also screenbound, with *Fast Five*'s **Chris Morgan** producing.

## VIRTUAL SPIELBERG! READY PLAYER ONE

► **Steven Spielberg**'s back in the popcorn SF game – and it feels like a perfect fit. The *Great Beard*'s attached to direct the big-screen take on this novel by **Ernest Cline**,

the tale of a teen named Wade Watts on a treasure hunt in a virtual reality realm known as OASIS. The book's a hymn to Amblin era pop culture – there's even a cameo by the flying DeLorean from *Back To The Future Part II* – so the fact that Spielberg's helming the adaptation is a whole funky barrel of meta. "We have always felt that Steven was the dream director for this project," says Warner Bros president **Greg Silverman**. It's been a buzz magnet property in Hollywood for a while now – everyone from Christopher Nolan to Peter Jackson to Robert Zemeckis to

Edgar Wright have been potential directors. The latest version of the script's by X2's **Zak Penn**.

## SQUAD BOTHERERS! SUICIDE SQUAD

► Warner Bros continue to swell the ranks of **David Ayer**'s *Suicide Squad*. Frankly it's not so much an ensemble cast as a small nation. Latest addition to the supervillainous roster is *Lost*'s **Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje**, tapped to play Batman's nemesis Killer Croc, a Gotham City crim with a reptilian spin. *Resident Evil* franchise face **Ray Olubowale** joins him as King Shark – go on,



## THE WRATH OF IDRIS? STAR TREK 3

► **Simon Pegg** is deep in screenplay duty on the next *Trek* movie. Turns out the script he's writing with **Doug Jung** is entirely new: "I haven't read Bob (Orsi)'s script and they didn't want us to," he tells *Den Of Geek*. "So we went back to the drawing board." But expect some old school *Trek* DNA in the mix. "[We] just want to take it forward with the spirit of the TV show," Pegg tells *Spinoff Online*. "It's a story about frontierism and adventure and optimism and fun, and that's where we want to take it." Bond-in-waiting **Idris Elba** is said to be in early talks for a substantial role, possibly the film's main villain. But Pegg photon torpedoes rumours that the *Luther* star will be swinging a bat'leth. "He may be in the film but he won't be a Klingon [laughs]. Or maybe he will!" So he's Khan, right? One casting lock: *Kingsman*'s **Sofia Boutella**.

guess his shtick, guess it – while **Karen Fukuhara** is tipped to play *Plastique*, a villain from the *Firestorm* comics. And no, she doesn't wield the cosmic power of Tupperware. **Scott Eastwood**, son of Clint, will play Steve Trevor, longtime love interest of Wonder Woman, recently reimagined in DC's New 52 as the head of clandestine organisation ARGUS. But will his teeth sparkle like Lyle Waggoner's in the titles to the '70s *Wonder Woman* show?

## AUTOBOTEROTICA! TRANSFORMERS

► If you want a picture of the future imagine the foot of a Transformer stamping on a human face... forever. Yes, people of planet Earth, it appears we must brace ourselves for remorseless, unrelenting clankage. Paramount Pictures is plotting maximum exploitation of its *Transformers* brand, aiming to establish a big-screen sandpit to rival the Marvel, *Star Wars* and, yes, *Ghostbusters* universes. It's the hot new thing, kids. The studio wants writer/producer **Akiva Goldsman** to assemble a writers' room, cranking out ideas for a potential multi-part sequel alongside multiple spin-off films designed to squeeze every last droplet of billion-dollar franchise juice. Goldman will be teamed with director **Michael Bay**, producer **Lorenzo di Bonaventura** and executive producer **Steven Spielberg**. The rest of us still have time to load civilisation's treasures onto a giant space ark.

## DA DOO TRON TRON! TRON 3

► Fire up the light cycles and break out the Daft Punk: Disney is officially moving forward with a third *Tron* movie. We'd call it a threequel but you'd punch the

page. This news arrives five years after *Tron 2.0*, a mere blink of a neon-dazzled eye compared to the near 30-year gap between that sequel and its predecessor. **Joseph Kosinski** returns as director and stars **Garrett Hedlund** and **Olivia Wilde** are also back for further adventures in the Grid – he's Sam, the son of the Jeff Bridges character in the 1982 original while she's Quorra, an ass-kicking algorithm. One rumoured title is *Tron: Ascension*, another's *Tron: Redemption*. No one's calling it *Tron: Electricity Billaggeedon*. Filming's expected to begin in Vancouver later this year with a potential release in 2017 or 2018.

## APOCALYPSE NOW! X-MEN: APOCALYPSE

► **Oscar Isaac** is earning his geek points. Later this year we'll see him in an obscure arthouse number named *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. Next year he's the titular immortal villain in **Bryan Singer**'s *X-Men: Apocalypse*. "You find something that makes it interesting for you," he tells *Esquire*. "The woman who invented Apocalypse, **Louise Simonson**, she was tasked with making a new arch villain. She said 'Okay, I'll make the embodiment of the Second Coming with the Four Horsemen and all.' That's scary shit. So I'm curious about that. What's the philosophical expression behind the apocalypse?" We like to think Vinnie Jones equally pondered the philosophical expression behind Juggernaut. Also heading for X-duty are **Lana Condor** as Jubilee, **Olivia Munn** as Psylocke, and *EastEnders* star **Ben Hardy** as winged mutant Angel. If the film sticks to the comics we'll see Angel brainwashed by Apocalypse and transformed into Archangel, leader of the Four Horsemen.

## ALSO BURNING



**SHERIDAN SMITH** and **ROB BRYDON** playing dwarfs in *Snow White* prequel *The Huntsman...*  
*The Winter Soldier*'s **JOE AND ANTHONY RUSSO** directing *Avengers: Infinity War 1* and 2... Sony planning *Robotech* franchise...  
*The Lego Movie*'s **PHIL LORD** and **CHRIS MILLER** writing 2018's *The Flash*... **FOREST WHITAKER** joining **AMY ADAMS** and **JEREMY RENNER** in alien contact tale *Story Of Your Life* for Paramount... *Section 6*'s **AARON BERG** rewriting *Gl Joe 3*... *Arrow*'s **STEPHEN AMELL** playing Casey Jones in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2*... **STEPHEN DORFF** to star in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* prequel *Leatherface*... Disney planning live-action *Mulan*... *Monsters: Dark Continent* writer **JAY BASU** to adapt *Metal Gear Solid* for Sony... Oscar-winner **EDDIE REDMAYNE** set to star in *Harry Potter* spin-off *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them*... *Ghostbuster* **ERNIE HUDSON** in the frame for King T'Chaka, ruler of Wakanda, in *The Black Panther*... *Disturbia*'s **CARL ELLSWORTH** writing the *Gremlins* remake... **JOSÉ PADILHA** helming *Mindcorp*... **VIVICA A FOX** returns for *Independence Day 2*... **MICHAEL BIEHN** confirms he's back as Hicks in **NEILL BLOMKAMP**'s *Alien 5*... **JOSEPH GORDON-LEVITT** to produce and star in big-screen version of *Fraggle Rock*... *Downton Abbey*'s **JESSICA BROWN FINDLAY** joining **JACK HUSTON** in *The Crow* reboot...

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## NEVER MISS AN ISSUE

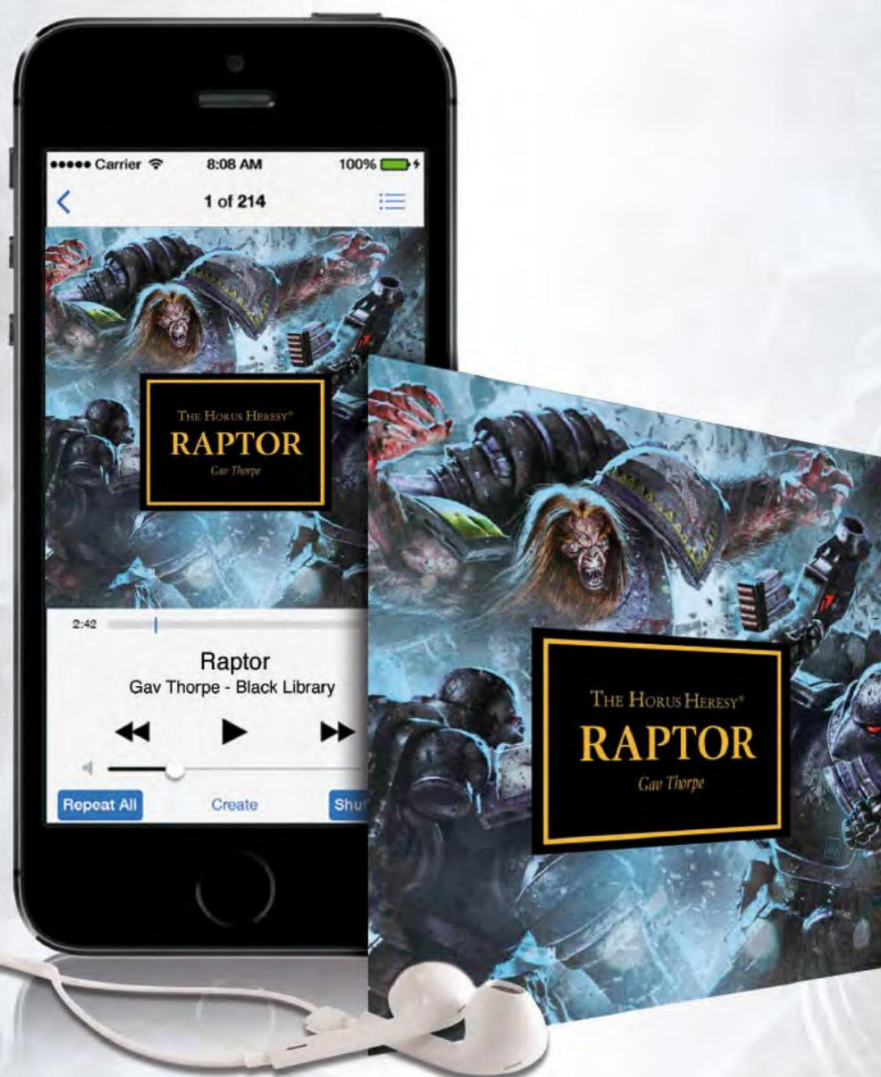
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# 20 Glorious Years

David Langford's *SFX* celebration is tinged with sadness



► SF writer David Langford has had a column in *SFX* since issue one.  
 ► David has received 29 Hugo Awards throughout his career.  
 ► His celebrated SF newsletter can be found at <http://news.ansible.co.uk>.  
 ► He is a principal editor of the SF Encyclopedia at <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com>.

**T**his *SFX* comes rolling off the presses 20 years after the first issue, which was dated June 1995, priced at “£3 of your Earth Money” and imaginatively numbered #1. In the light of hindsight, true ubergeeks or William Gibson would have started the count at zero. Somehow, over the decades, I’d mercifully forgotten that my first column drafts were titled “Supercritical” – a quirk which inaugural *SFX* editor Matt Bielby wisely ignored.

Those were the days when paperbacks cost £4.99, the hot new cover-billed film was *Tank Girl*, Glasgow’s first World SF Convention took a full-page ad, the tie-in merchandise spot was headed “Objets d’arse”, and readers were carefully briefed on this new-fangled Internet thingy: “All you need to connect to Futurenet is an Internet account, such as Demon or Cityscape, or a direct college connection. Then simply use your World Wide Web browser...” But first, *switch the computer on*.

Reviewers were seemingly in short supply for the first half-year of *SFX*. In those seven issues, besides the first seven Langford columns and an interview with Christopher Priest, I had 53 book reviews. To the relief of all concerned, this glut of me was never repeated.

The first-written review was of Terry Pratchett’s *Soul Music* in paperback, *Discworld* novel #15. Now there are 40 (with one last Tiffany Aching YA tale to come), this feels like an early book of the series but it certainly didn’t then. As I write, the day after Sir Terry’s all too early death at age 66, the tributes and obituaries are everywhere. He leaves a big jagged hole in the world.

I was always a tiny bit nervous about reviewing *Discworld* novels, because I suspected I should declare an interest. Once upon a time I wrote an enthusiastic reader’s report on *Equal Rites* for



Gollancz, which may have helped persuade them that they needed Terry. But they probably didn’t need telling.

That led to many years of reading Pratchett for corrupt personal gain – going through the early drafts and reporting on plot holes, continuity problems, jokes that seemed to need more polishing or went right over my head...

“Langfordization” of *Discworld* novels became a tradition, continuing from *Mort* through to *Thud!*, but of course I can’t take any credit for the results. Mostly it was a matter of prodding Terry to tackle issues he vaguely knew about but hadn’t yet got around to. It was fun.

Amazing revelations will not follow, since this tinkering was all in deadly confidence. As our man

it was the British Council’s own publishers who approached me about writing this official acceptance of Terry into the UK literary pantheon, he predicted that a backlash of literary snobbery would ensure “that this will wither away”... and he was right.

My jokey prediction in the September 1998 *SFX*: “A few decades hence, perhaps Sir Terry Pratchett will celebrate his 80th birthday by launching the First Church of Discworld.” Right about the Sir, which followed in 2009. Wrong about the 80th birthday – but how I wish I hadn’t been. **SFX**

*David Langford notes that SFX #1 also had an interview with Iain M Banks. Another good man lost too soon.*

**In the first seven issues of *SFX* I had 53 book reviews**

would add to email when he remembered that I also publish an SF scandal sheet: “NFA, YB!” (Not For Ansible, You Bastard.)

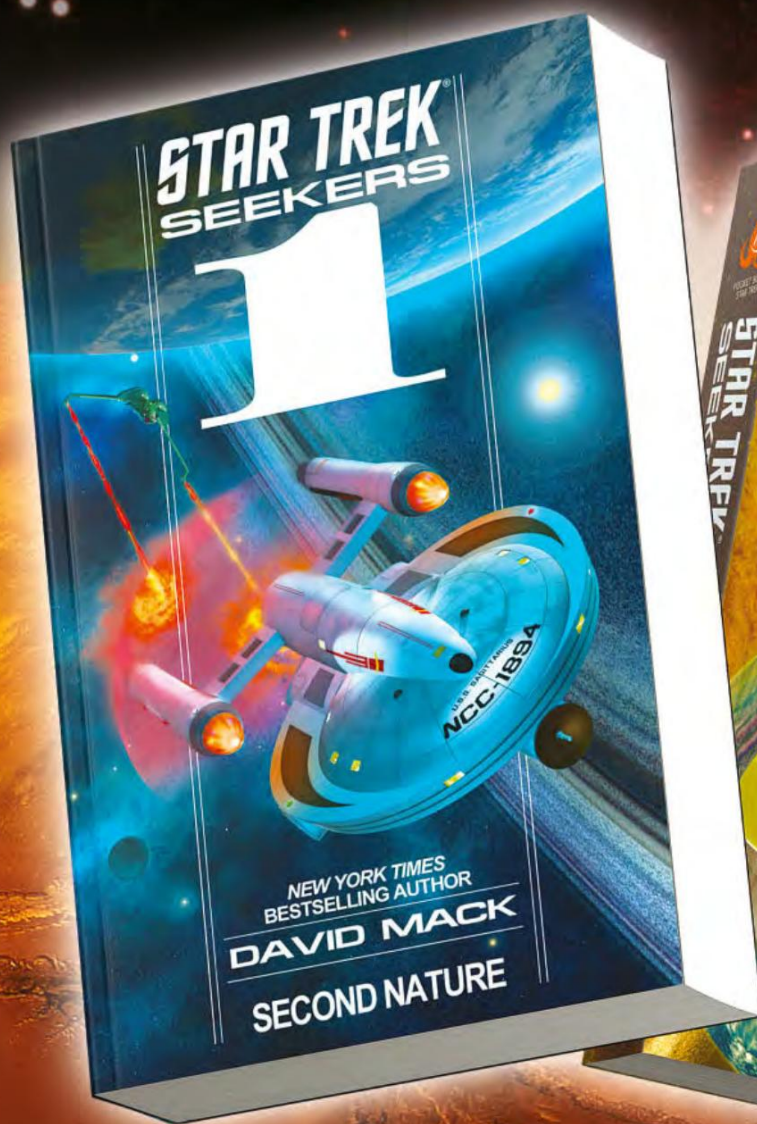
I’m endlessly grateful for all the silly conversations at conventions in places as far-flung as Australia; for the introductions Terry generously wrote for my own comic novel *The Leaky Establishment* and my two *Discworld* quizbooks; and for the opportunity to write about him in dozens of reference books and, very nearly, an official British Council “Writers And Their Work” booklet. Although



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# Doubling Up

Imagine if there were *two* Bonnie Burtons...

**C**lones get a bad rap. Sci-fi movies have been flooding our brains with anti-clone propaganda for ages. Poor clones are either shown as mere obedient soldiers as in the *Star Wars* prequels or as walking organ farms in movies like *Parts: The Clonus Horror* (1979) and its dumber 2005 Michael Bay version *The Island*.

But what about those of us who want human cloning to be a real option? Don't worry; I don't want to clone myself so I can swap livers after consuming a lifetime of strong martinis. I want a clone for something much more banal than better organs. I need a clone to get stuff done. I can't ever say no to party invites, writing assignments, podcast interviews, web series appearances and convention panels. And then there's all the really boring stuff like grocery shopping, standing in line at the post office, walking my dog, cleaning my house, doing paperwork, filing taxes, organising my bookshelves, doing laundry, answering endless emails, and so on.

I don't want a slave. I promise to send my clone to just as many celebrity-infested industry parties as I have her planting tulips in my backyard. I just don't have time to accomplish everything I set out to do on a daily basis. Granted, if I stopped binge-watching *Game Of Thrones* and *The Flash*, and didn't waste so much time scrolling through Twitter, I might be able to better prioritise my To Do list. But who does that?

I want to squander my hours on social media and make a dent in my Netflix queue just like everyone else, while writing my next novel, shopping around my screenplays to Hollywood and having a social life too. Is that so much to ask?

And the only way to get everything done like a pro means I need to invest in a human clone of myself. I can't send a robot into parties to impersonate me! What if I short circuit at the



buffet table or accidentally injure my dance partner with my metal left foot?

Robots and Replicants can only do so much before something goes horribly wrong. If I learned anything from *Blade Runner*, it's that synthetic humans can't be held responsible for rampaging through rainstorms and having panic attacks when asked about tortoises.

The main difference is that I won't be made of metal or have a finite existence of a few years. I'll be human still, and my clone will know she is a clone. I don't want to give her the impression that she's my twin. She exists because I paid for her to be created to share both my workload and my social obligations. Heck, she doesn't even have to live with me – just do my bidding.

thinks, drinks, eats and dreams just like me. That means I need a double that still says inane puns and can't seem to refuse a dozen donuts. I don't want a better version of myself – that would give me away for sure. Plus the last thing I want is my clone to have a better social life than the real me!

I need a clone that has the same desires and passions as I do. But perhaps, I do need a clone that isn't as lazy as me, or else I'll just have another version of myself to share the couch with as we shamelessly watch an entire season of *Arrow* all at once. **SFX**

**Bonnie reckons the reason it didn't work for Michael Keaton in *Multiplicity* is that they were different variations of his personality.**



► Our columnist Bonnie Burton, a San Francisco-based author, has written a number of books including her latest – *The Star Wars Craft Book*.  
► Bonnie appears on the massive "Geek & Sundry" and "Stan Lee's World Of Heroes" YouTube channels.  
► More of her writing can be found at [www.grrl.com](http://www.grrl.com).

## My clone can have fun, just as long as it's with none of my exes

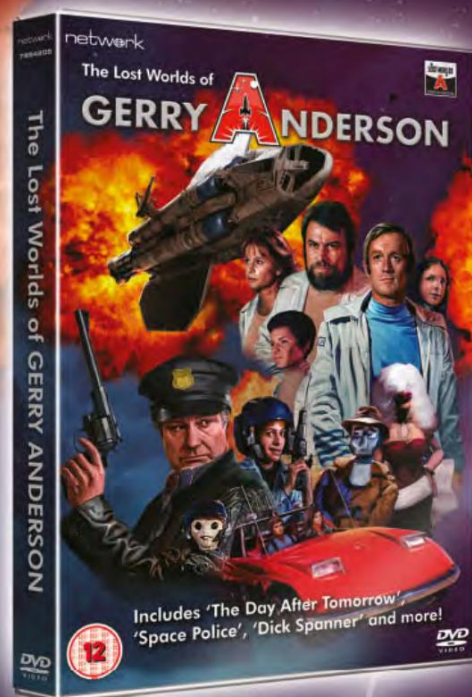
It's not exactly slavery if I create her, right? She didn't have a life before I came along. My clone has life because I came along. Her sole purpose is to make sure we both lead an active life – *my* life. Of course, she can't go around making her own decisions on what to do, where to go or who to hang out with – those choices are all decided by me. But she can still have fun, just as long as it's with none of my exes.

I need a reliable facsimile of myself, and the only way to fool friends and family is with a human clone that looks,



**"A wide-ranging collection that showcases Anderson's versatility as a film maker". Sci-fi bulletin**

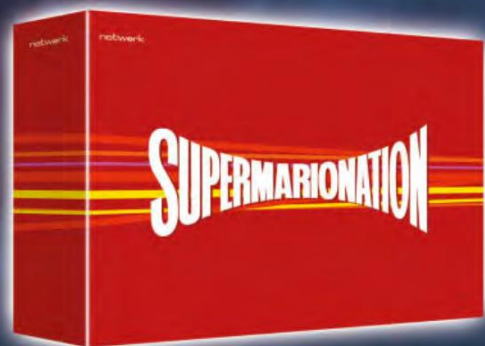
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This May *SFX* celebrates its 20th anniversary. To mark the occasion, we're hopping in our DeLorean, revving up to 88mph, and going back to where it all began in 1995 so you can get the magazine for even less than you did when we launched!

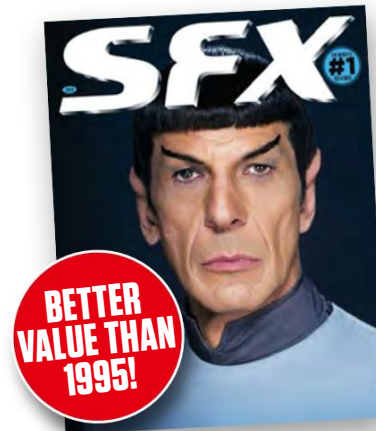
You can now get a print subscription for just £17.99 every six months – that works out at less than the £3 you had to pay when *SFX* first landed on planet Earth. If you think about how much, say, a pint of beer has gone up in that time – well, that should give you an idea of how great this offer is.

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*Rich*

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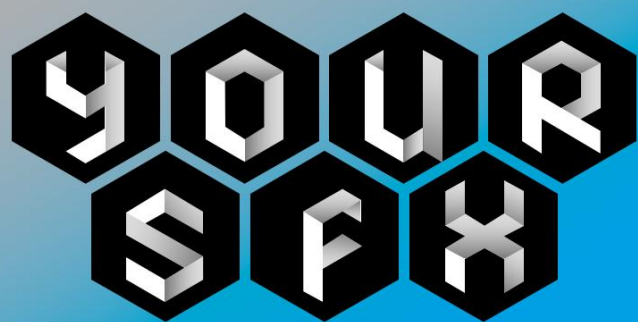
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# Post Apocalypse

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THIS MONTH'S  
LETTERS  
COMPILED BY

**Russell Lewin,**  
Production  
Editor

► A bittersweet *Your SFX* this issue, because while you help us celebrate 20 great years of this magazine, it's also time to pay tribute to a recently deceased literary giant. Elsewhere, *Beauty And The Beast* has a defender, *Ghostbusters* has a nemesis and *Star Wars* has a dreamer.

## WRITE IN AND WIN!



We don't expect you to give us all your words of wisdom for free, you know. Oh no. The winner of each issue's Star Letter wins a gratis book courtesy of our chums at the Black Library. Oh yes. Which means that this month the venerable Chris Bunting over there grabs a copy of *Warhammer 40,000* novel *The World Engine* by Ben Counter. The fortunate fellow. But you could bag a book too, if we like what you have to say also. If you're not Chris Bunting and fancy *The World Engine*, it's available to buy now for £20 from [www.blacklibrary.com](http://www.blacklibrary.com) and [www.games-workshop.com](http://www.games-workshop.com).



Gone but never  
to be forgotten.

## FAREWELL SIR TERRY

In 1988 I gave my copies of *The Colour Of Magic*, *The Light Fantastic* and *Mort* to a friend of mine who was going to see Sir Terry when he went to a comic shop in Peterborough. The owners of the grotto-like shop had told me that he always stopped by when he came through to sign a few copies of his books for them. I had to go to work but my friend went to the comic shop and Sir Terry signed my three books, filling a whole page of each with his "killer best wishes from 10,000 leagues under the sea".

That was 1988 and only us nerds knew who he was then. Over the years I bought and read all of his books, reading them at university and then taking them to oil rigs in various other countries. I remember being annoyed at the sycophancy over a certain home-counties

magical schoolboy and not having read a word in the press about Sir Terry's assassin-school educated pharaoh Teppic – to name but one of many vibrant characters.

So thank you, Sir Terry; thank you for your characters and your world and for taking the time to go to a small comic shop and sign your books for us when anyone else would have stayed on the train at Peterborough station. You are no small god now and my thoughts are for your family.

*Craig Bunting*

**Thanks Chris, and thanks to all for your letters about Sir Terry. Meeting the man – particularly when he came to SFX Towers to guest edit issue 196 – was a career highlight for many of the magazine team. Turn to page 60 for our full tribute.**

**THIS COULD BE YOU! EMAIL [SFX@FUTURENET.COM](mailto:sfx@futurenet.com)**



## HOT TOPIC WHAT ARE YOUR MEMORIES OF 20 YEARS OF SFX?

I remember when I first saw issue one on the shelves of my newsagents it was in the same section as *FHM*, *Loaded* and *Maxim* (they did the thing of mistaking the F for an E) but it popped off the shelf. It was something new, a magazine for sci-fi geeks that was hip and cool (yeah, 21-year-old me needs a slap). Here was a magazine one could leaf through in any coffee-shop or indie-bar. Geek-chic had arrived. (Ooh! I need a slap!)

*Jack Woodgate*

What's my favourite memory of *SFX*? Could it be picking up issue one, all white and pink and shiny, in the Virgin Megastore on a trip to Glasgow on release day? Or getting my first subscriber copy a month after – *Judge Dredd* on the cover. Who thought that was a good idea again?

Could it be doing my first Couch Potato after years reading the feature – or doing the *Spaced* one round at Simon Pegg's house and ending up sleeping in his spare room after we missed the train home? Could it be launching the *SFX Network* and seeing it fly so high (before suffering such a bump), or seeing the My Sci-Fi feature we launched on that still being used to this day in the mag?

Nope. All those remain cherished, beautiful thoughts – but my favourite memory is being dressed in bubblewrap and Danish pastries to pretend to be Princess Leia for one of Fordy's insane marketing ideas while young Thomas Mayo swung a baguette like a lightsaber. Thankfully all pictures from that have been lost to the ether (he said hopefully...).

**YOUR SFX  
CONTENTS**

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## "Congratulations on 20 years of glorious genre journalism"

Congratulations on hitting 20 years of glorious genre journalism. You've lit up the newsstands with sparkling copy, stunning covers and the word SEX apparently peaking out the top of the magazine rack.

Iain Hepburn  
(former SFX writer)

I met my wife through the pen pal page. I forget the issue number, it was 13 years ago and had Harrison Ford in grey on the cover [Sounds like the best thing ever to come from *What Lies Beneath*! - Ed].

Eduard Korhonen

The first number I bought was in Coimbra, Portugal, in 1997, number 29, the cover was *Alien: Resurrection*, if I'm not mistaken [you are - it was *Babylon 5*! - Ed]. It was my girlfriend who offered it to me, since she knew I loved all things related to science fiction, and even if I was a nerd, I was a cute one. I have since been a subscriber for more than 10 years.

The girlfriend is long gone and the cuteness also went with the wind, but I'm still a nerd at heart, and one of the reasons for it, is because I kept reading SFX!

Gaspar Garçon

I used to enjoy your awards ceremonies, especially the one at Wolf 359 in Blackpool (the year the fire alarms got set off and JMS lost the scripts for season five of *Babylon 5*).

Andrew Grant

I got my first subscription to your magazine at Christmas 2004. It was a gift from my brother and his girlfriend. I never really got on with Lee as we were growing up, but Samantha turned our relationship around. And they always gave the best Christmas pressies! So that year, that's what I received. A year's worth of geek heaven on a monthly basis! I was chuffed!

Lee and Sam died in 2005. But SFX kept turning up at my



## ask the SFXperts

If you can't remember it, we can! Your sci-fi problems solved...

### CANDLE KILLERS

Can you help identify a movie I watched when I was a teenager? All I remember is a possessed young girl charged friends to watch her sister in her bedroom through a spy hole and someone

being locked in a fridge. Would love to find out what it is.

Mark Jeffreys, Guernsey

**GUEST SFXPERT**  
**PHIL ASKEY SAYS:**  
I believe this is a film called

Lost in a sea of sci-fi ignorance? Send questions to [sfxperts@futurenet.com](mailto:sfxperts@futurenet.com). Want to be a guest SFXpert? Head to [www.gamesradar.com/ask-sfxperts](http://www.gamesradar.com/ask-sfxperts) to see a list of unanswered questions. Cash In The AT-AT returns next month...

## THIS MONTH IN SCI-FI HISTORY

SFX 197  
Summer 2010



*Predators* scowls from the cover while inside was the SFX Hot 50. Who was number one? Christopher Nolan no less.

5 YEARS AGO

SFX 132  
July 2005



Wonder if anyone else has ever had the idea of punning on "who" on the cover of a mag promoting *Doctor Who*?

10 YEARS AGO

SFX 66  
July 2000



It's pink! It's Buffy! It's Lexxy! And in Reviews MJ Simpson gives five stars to dire Brit flick *24 Hours In London*.

15 YEARS AGO

**Bloody Birthday**, from 1981. It's about three children born during a solar eclipse who were "born evil" and go around killing people. At one point they lock a young boy (who witnessed them moving a body) in a fridge. And the sister of the evil girl gets an arrow to the face on the trio's titular anniversary. It's widely available on Blu-ray and DVD.





## SOAPOX SFX WRITERS' PERSONAL RANTS

### Nick Setchfield says it's time Batman got over *The Dark Knight Returns*



Time for the Knight  
to be a bit less dark?

**B**ruce Wayne saw his parents gunned down in a Gotham alley. Psychiatrists call that a defining event (the rest of us would call it a major downer). It's his essential tragedy, the trauma he can never escape. He's cursed to revisit it, endlessly, in merciless slo-mo, every time Batman's brought to the screen. But there's another defining event in his history, another shadow on his psyche, another scar that's never allowed to heal. It's called *The Dark Knight Returns*.

Yes, I get it: Frank Miller's graphic novel was groundbreaking, revolutionary, important. It was the kick in the cape the superhero genre needed in the doldrums of the mid-'80s. Alongside *Watchmen* it redefined and deepened the possibilities of the medium. And its success forced Hollywood to finally take notice of Batman. 1989's Tim Burton movie would never have happened without Miller's compelling, provocative vision, a take that finally laid the camp, day-glo ghost of the 1960s TV show to rest.

But that's all it was. A take. An interpretation. A riff on the Batman myth, no more and no less valid than Adam West in tights. *The Dark Knight Returns* was a thought experiment, an

Elseworlds tale, a What If? What if you nudged this character to an extreme? What if you amplified the darkness in his DNA? What if you took all those quasi-fascist currents and gave them their head? The result was a hell of a story, part-political satire, part-*Dirty Harry* power fantasy, part-Ragnarok. But it's only one story in seven decades of stories.

Miller's take is so powerful, so persuasive, that it's in danger of becoming the definitive Batman, eclipsing all others. It's said to be the key influence on the

### It's in danger of becoming the definitive Batman

upcoming DC superhero movies, shaping everything from the central conflict in *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* to Jared Leto's Joker in *Suicide Squad*.

But Batman is too rich a myth to be bound by one narrow interpretation. He's the world-hopping science fiction hero of the '50s, the gothic avenger of the '70s, the psychedelic time-traveller of Grant Morrison's run. These Batmen have as much right to exist as Miller's. The Batcave's big enough for all of them.

door. From them. And it always, ALWAYS put a smile on my face when it arrived. Because it was still from them. And I cherished every issue because of it. That, and it's just a good mag, too! So, thanks for giving me these memories.

*Rob Harris*

My greatest experience with SFX is donating the issues to my school library. They had issues from 2004-2008, so I decided to donate my issues to give SF fans something slightly more contemporary to read. I look forward to donating future issues!

*Carlos Almonacid*

Twenty years? Surely it hasn't been that long?! I still have all my copies and peruse them from time to time. I love the tongue-in-cheek captions to the photos, and crawling through the small print to find gems that have been left for those who are patient.

*Dave Hartley*

► **Thanks for all your recollections about the mag and, of course, thanks for reading. Stay with us because, if anything, the future is going to be even brighter!**

### INVASION EARTH!

I think the future for British sci-fi is unfortunately rather bleak at the moment, but if any TV company wanted my opinion on ideas for a new drama I would want something around space travel and aliens coming to Earth, from a British point of view. I saw an article in the paper recently which said that SETI are looking at intensifying their efforts to send messages out into space, and the comment was made that we might be safer not to draw attention to ourselves. If that's not a cue for a drama series I don't know what is.

*Gillian Alcock*

► **Ah, let's draw attention to ourselves! Who cares what might happen? If there's a big party going on beyond the stars then we should be part of it!**

### NOT SO BEASTLY

I found it a bit condescending that you called the renewal of *Beauty And The Beast* for a fourth season (before the third season has even been transmitted) "inexplicable".

Perhaps you should keep in mind that your readers have a variety of tastes and that some of



them, like me, actually like this television show.

I like *Beauty And The Beast* for its romantic storyline, kick-ass heroine who can mostly save herself and the good-looking "Beast". There seems to be a dearth of romantic fantasy and SF TV shows around at the moment and this just fills this gap nicely.

*Ilona Kosmowsky*

► **I'm afraid the SFX crew aren't with you on this one, Ilona – our most ardent telly watcher reckons it's "cheesy rubbish". If it's romantic fantasy you're after we highly recommend *Outlander*. (By the way, doesn't it somewhat defeat the object if the Beast is good-looking...?)**

### WHO THEY GONNA CALL

Well if I didn't want to make a hasty exit from the planet and/or the human race before today, I do now. I was quite supportive of the whole idea of rebooting *Ghostbusters* around an all-female cast, because, well, it's the 21st century now, so why the hell not? We live in more enlightened times now, surely? But no – some





**Powers**, in need of more potty language?

troubled (and possibly drooling and slime trail-emitting) soul decided that that would be unfair to men, and has thus since decided to commission an all-male version of *Ghostbusters*. Which, quite aside from the fact that that's actually just the original *Ghostbusters*, was clearly needed on account of there not being enough action/comedy films featuring men. I mean, just look at all of the female-led MCU-based films that Marvel have put out! It's a travesty of injustice!

Really, though, did they (and by "they" I mean the self-important, entitlement hungry idiots that made this retrograde decision) not get the memo that SF/F was meant to be all-inclusive? Hasn't anyone

watched any *Star Trek* recently? Well watch it again. And learn, people! Learn!

*The Llama God, The Dark and Apparently 1800s-Locked Lands Beyond the Wall*

► **What's perhaps curious is that they're talking of a huge, over-reaching *Ghostbusters* franchise, as if it was *Marvel* or *Star Wars*. Steady on, fellas: there've only been two films and a couple of animated TV series!**

## DOG DOWN UNDER

Hello *SFX* from Brisbane, Australia. Thank you for such a great mag. I am an Australian Aboriginal artist, my daughter is a mad *Doctor Who* fan and so I did a painting for her of K-9, which I would like to share with you.

Scott Moore

► **That's well good that is, Scott. And it's reminded me that you Aussies made your own K-9 TV series in 2009/10 – completely forgotten about that! I'm pleased to note that you've used the silhouette of the faithful hound before he was transformed in episode one.**



## "Perhaps a Rebel mission to capture Death Star plans?"



He looks a bit of a Rogue.

## EFFING AND BLINDING

The pilot for *Powers* is brilliant. From the acting, the camerawork, to the writing, it's all on point. There is a problem with it though, and that's Deena. Changing her ethnicity isn't a problem. She doesn't swear enough! Deena is a hard-swearing cynic – the show has her a bit too wide-eyed and pleasant. If they can tweak this over the season the show has the potential to rival *SHIELD* or even (whisper it quietly) *Arrow*.

Mike Garner, Moorends

► **You didn't whisper quietly enough – I heard. Love or hate *Powers*, isn't it great to have so much superhero TV on the box? And it's not all DC and Marvel.**

## THE FANS AWAKEN

So we now have a release date and title for the first of the standalone *Star Wars* movies – *Rogue One*. With that title does it mean we'll be getting an X-Wing Rebel pilot focused story? An early Rebellion-based tale? I personally would love a Rebel Alliance grunts focused story, more dealing with those on the front line of the Galactic Civil War, the troops out in the field, the pilots making the difference without the need for the Force to help them, more gritty *Band Of Brothers* style soldiering set in the *Star Wars* universe. Or perhaps the Rebel mission to capture (either of) the Death Star plans? Too many exciting possibilities.

Harold Okafor-Withers

► **Wonder if they'll call the sequel *Rogue Two*, arf.**

WAHF

## WE ALSO HEARD FROM

► **Paul Hill** (paying affectionate tribute to Terry Pratchett and pondering the future of Discworld); ► **English Tony** (staggered that it's been 20 years since that famous *Tank Girl* cover); ► **Helen Williams** (remembering the internal debate on whether to slit open the Spoiler Zone pages or to leave them sealed!); ► **Neil Howard** (chuffed that he made long-term pals through our old classified columns); ► **Claire Webber** (fond memories of the first *SFX* event at the Norbreck in Blackpool); ► **Stacey Shaw** (remembering the long since gone penpal pages); ► **Liam Curry** ("The *SFX* Weekender in Prestatyn was fun while it lasted"); ► **Jamie Warr** (misses the forum); ► **Steven Critcher** (recalling the *SFX* event in Blackpool where he met James Marsters and then appeared in the mag); ► **Neil Hickman** (thanking us for keeping alive his interest in *Supernatural* after it disappeared from ITV, and also paying tribute to Sir Terry); ► **Pradeep Batura** (one of our readers in India, loving the mag but wanting more coverage of comics); ► **Peter Lowdon** (says our *Secret Wars* Time Machine brought back some good memories – check out our feature on new *Secret Wars* on p78!); ► **Daryl Smith** ("So will you be covering *Fortitude* now? If you've been watching you know what I mean!") Er, maybe. Who saw that twist coming...; ► **Gary Watson** (concerned by Marvel's *Secret Wars* 2025 storyline, and mourning Leonard Nimoy's loss); ► **Daniel Smith** (agreeing with Russell that the last series of *Doctor Who* was hugely underwhelming); ► **Harold Okafor-Withers** (again, lauding *The 100* – "Well worth catching up with it again if you'd lost faith in the show at the end"); ► **Keith Tudor** (reminding us that new *Who* is now ten years old and how fab it was when it came back); and many, many more...



## SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH THE SCI-FI WORLD!

Write in and you'll win some books if we feature you in the star letter slot. Email us at [sfx@futurenet.com](mailto:sfx@futurenet.com) or you can try Post Apocalypse, *SFX*, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA if you're not taken with technology.



# Wishlist

Illustrating what you want to see in new SF films and television.

**This Month:** don't lose your head, it's the *Highlander* remake

## Highlander

YOUR TOP 5 REQUESTS

### THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE

**1** The very idea of a *Highlander* remake went down like a One Direction set at a death metal festival with *SFX* readers, but if it *must* happen you'd like to see an actual Scottish actor play immortal Highlander Connor MacLeod of the Clan MacLeod: "Richard Madden for Connor and Felicity Jones as 'my wee bonny Heather,'" says **John O'Malley**.

### SPANISH PEACOCK

**2** Tom Cruise was once rumoured to be playing Connor's 2,500-year-old, Egyptian-born mentor Juan Sanchez Villa-Lobos Ramirez, but **Chris Eaton** and **Art Patterson** both had a much better idea – Antonio Banderas. "It's a good formula to have a Connery-level actor for Ramirez and a lesser-known actor for Connor," adds **John Mosby**.

### A KIND OF MAGIC

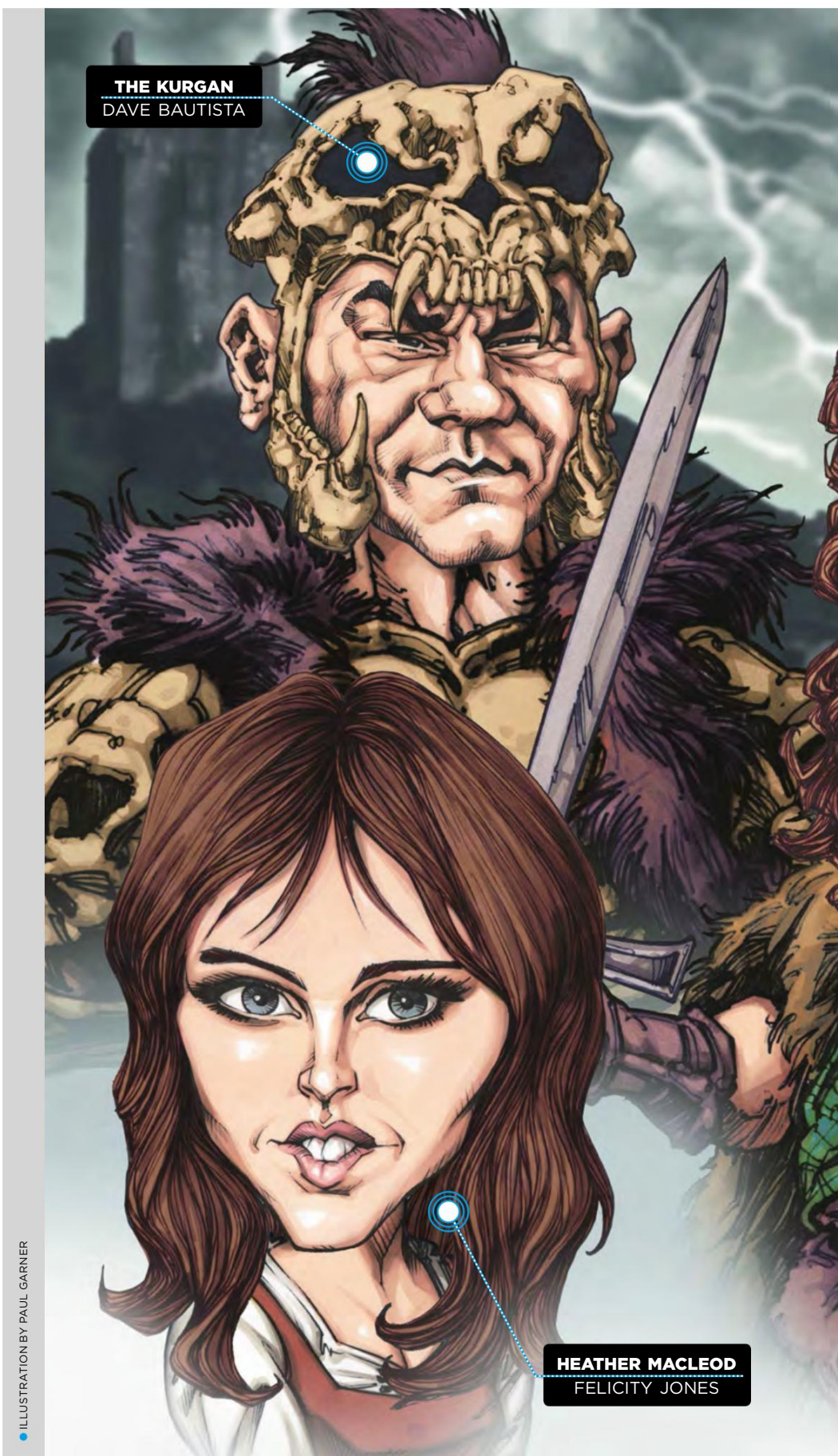
**3** Queen and *Highlander* go hand in hand, so it's no surprise **Belle Alice Lowndes** wants the original film's soundtrack left largely intact. "They need to keep the essence of the soundtrack: Freddie Mercury's vocals, the effortlessly epic sounds. Update the arrangements, sure, but keep the music."

### LOCATION LOCATION

**4** For a film that had 400 years of history to play with we saw very little of the world in *Highlander*. **David Stephens** wants to see more in the remake: "Get right back to the basic concept and play up the lonely immortal angle, with plenty of flashbacks set during historical conflicts."

### LOVE FOREVER

**5** **David Chapman** just wants the remake to recapture what made the first film great: "Remember that *Highlander* is a love story with humour and sword fighting. The sequels didn't work in part because they forgot that."







## ARE YOU LISTENING?

For the love of Zeist, hear our readers, Hollywood

► Brian Blessed for Ramirez, because anything he says will be awesome! **Andy P Meakin**

► Vic Reeves as MacLeod and Bob Mortimer as Ramirez. Pretty much the entire cast of *House Of Fools* really. **Wayne Cowie**

► The only acceptable change in the soundtrack would be to have Muse cover the Queen originals.

### Mark Causier

► Gerard Butler for Connor and Robert Downey Jr for Ramirez.

### Gee David Hannah Wright

► The original *Highlander* is my favourite film of all time and it's defined by the quality music of Queen. No remake will ever come close to it. **Gareth Eardley**

► Base it in Edinburgh, with Gillian Anderson as the love interest. **Ann Newman**

► A great looking, digitally restored director's cut on Blu-ray and a time machine to stop all the sequels from happening.

### Joeri Donsu

► Fewer middle-aged men in raincoats doing backflips in car parks. **FlangeBadger**

► Ewan McGregor as Connor MacLeod. **Kevin Hall**

► Thomas Jane as Connor MacLeod (only because he is the spitting image of Christopher Lambert). Better still don't make it because I don't think lightning (or the quickening) strikes twice.

### Paul Richards

► Cameos from Christopher Lambert and TV Highlander Adrian Paul plus hints at characters from the TV series like *The Watchers* which could hint at future sequels. **Robert**

### William Graham

► ZEIST! We want more Zeist! [are you messing with us? - Ed]

### Keith Heeney

► Richard Madden as MacLeod, Kim Coates as Ramirez and Iron Maiden for the soundtrack. Stick to the original story, forget the sequels. **Matt Halliday**

► James Purefoy of *Solomon Kane* to play Connor MacLeod.

### JoeTheCooler

► Get Queen and Adam Lambert to do the soundtrack. Or Muse.

### Stephen Graves

### coming soon

## Ghost In The Shell and Aquaman

Scarlett Johansson and Jason Momoa star in the live-action adapts of the classic anime and DC's aquatic comic. Or do they...



Send in your ideas about our current Wishlist by visiting [bit.ly/SFXwishlist](http://bit.ly/SFXwishlist)



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RICHARD MADDEN

BRENDA WYATT  
GEMMA ARTERTON

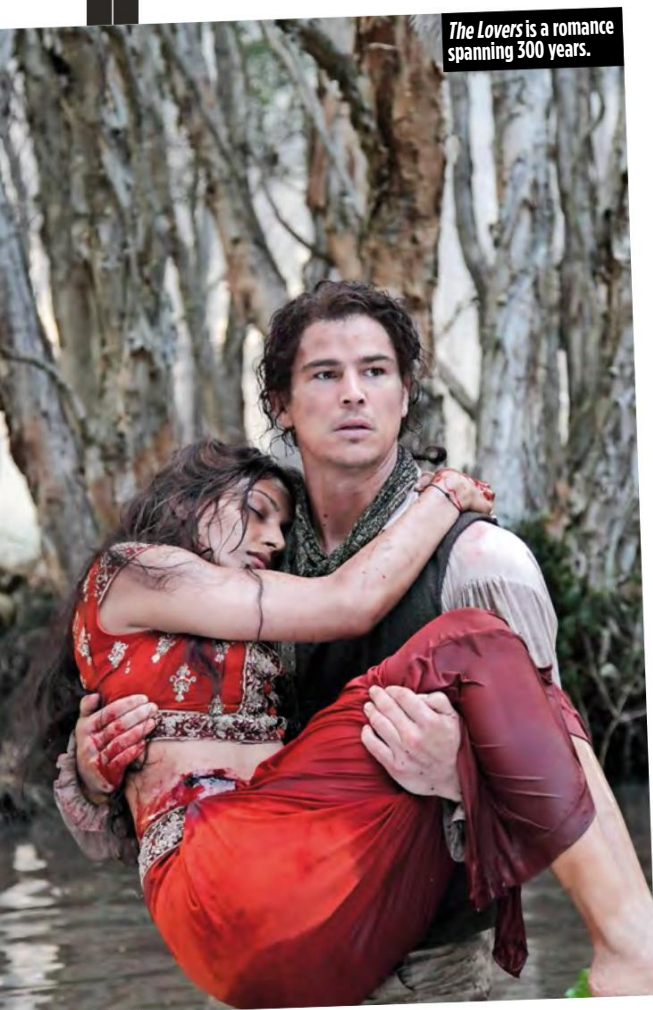
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# Event Horizon

Because meeting up is every fan's right



The Lovers is a romance spanning 300 years.

## DON'T MISS IT!

## SCI-FI-LONDON 28 May-6 June 2015, Venues across London

Festival director Louis Savvy on the films not to miss this year

### THE DEATH OF SUPERMAN LIVES

► "It's our opening night film. The idea of Nic Cage with his mullet as Superman – you think, 'Thank god they didn't make it.' It looks like it would have been an interesting story with much more off-world and him being a proper alien. The documentary's got some of the pre-vis and test shots but I think I would have struggled with seeing it, which is why the documentary's so interesting."



The ever chatty Kevin Smith appears in *The Death Of Superman Lives*.

### THE LOVERS

► "We've got Roland Joffé's new film with Josh Hartnett. It's set in 2020 in America. He and his wife are marine archaeologists. They find a ship with a ring on it. Then there's an accident and he ends up effectively thrown back in time to the late 1700s and finds himself in India as a soldier. And then he falls in love with a warrior princess. It's fabulous and gloriously lush with big setpieces."

### LIZA, THE FOX-FAIRY

► "If you get a chance to watch it, it will blow your mind. It's about a woman who's just turning 30 and is looking for love. She's got this imaginary friend who's a '60s Japanese crooner but no one else can see him and this ghostly character becomes jealous and starts bumping off anyone who has any affection or any interest in her. It's very comic, very dark, and completely insane."

### MOVEMENT AND LOCATION

► "A woman comes from 400 years in the future to live in our time and she's really out of place. She gets a job working for a homeless shelter for young people. The time travellers have all got this weird mark, and she finds this girl has got one as well, and then takes her in. From there, it just gets darker. It's fabulous."

### MAN VS

► "It's lovely and really fun. The main character runs a YouTube channel show called *Man Vs* where he gets put into remote locations with just a rucksack. The first evening, there's a mighty explosion – it looks like a meteor has hit the area, and from there it gets more sinister as he finds all these weird things start happening. It's high action and very, very believable. I highly recommend it." [sci-fi-london.com](http://sci-fi-london.com)

## CON REPORT

## London Super Comic Con 14-15 March 2015, ExCeL

An ExCeL-ent weekend at a busy London Super Comic Con

**M**OST CONVENTIONS EVOLVE OVER TIME, the better ones change for the better. London Super Comic Con seems to have learnt well from previous shows – this year's was by far the busiest and also the most enjoyable since it began four years ago.

In the past the show has struggled to fill the echoing hall at the ExCeL in London's Docklands, but the new layout – along with a massively expanded Artists' Alley – made things feel almost cosy in such a large venue.

LSCC has succeeded in fostering the community side of comics – the mix of the mainstream and the small press, all mingled together without being shoved to one side, means a much broader appeal. Previous issues have been ironed out and – although the panel venues still need work – the staff were friendly, the queues were orderly, and the atmosphere felt warmly positive all weekend.

© Valentin Offner

Make no bones about it – LSCC is not a comics giant killer about to slay the cross-media show behemoths, but it certainly can lay claim to being the biggest convention just for comics and the depth of the guest list shows that it is maturing well; it used to have to pin its fortunes on one or two big names, but that's no longer the case. Joining Dave Gibbons, John McCrea, David Mack, Art Adams, Garth Ennis and Neal Adams were the legendary Bill Sienkiewicz and Brian Bolland, and despite Saturday being consistently jam-packed, queues never became torturous.

Over four years LSCC has gradually found its feet and now that it has struck the right balance it's beginning to feel a lot like the UKCAC shows of the '80s and '90s. The main convention season is off to a brisk start and it will be interesting to see where LSCC goes from here.

[www.londonsupercomicconvention.com](http://www.londonsupercomicconvention.com)



The security guards were kinda brutal...



BBC

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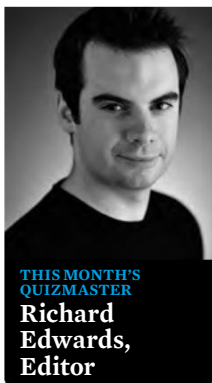


SFX YEARS

1995 - 2015

# Blastermind

In honour of our 20th anniversary, here's one question for every year of our existence



THIS MONTH'S QUIZMASTER  
**Richard Edwards,**  
Editor



**1995** Who played creepy town sheriff Lucas Buck in the short-lived *American Gothic*?

**1996** "My name is John Loengard. I'm recording this because we may not live through the night. They're here, they're hostile, and powerful people don't want you to know. History as we know it is a lie." Which TV show started with these words?

**1997** Which R&B singer sang about "Gotham City" on the soundtrack for *Batman & Robin*?

**1998** Which ridiculously successful future TV creator and movie director had a screenwriting credit on *Armageddon*?



**1999** Which regular of Victoria Wood's TV shows played a fighter pilot in *Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace*?

**2000** What's the final instalment of Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy?

**2001** Name the *Halo* AI who now gives her name to Microsoft's answer to Apple's Siri.

**2002** Mark Millar wrote Marvel's first *Ultimates* volume, but who drew the pictures?



**2003** *The Return Of The King* equalled the record for Academy Award wins this year. Which two previous films also won 11 Oscars?



**2004** What's the airline/flight number of the doomed plane in *Lost*?

**2005** Which character from the *Fantastic Four* comics did Stan Lee play in the Tim Story-directed movie?

**2006** Which Guillermo del Toro regular played the Pale Man and the Faun in *Pan's Labyrinth*?

**2007** Aside from bringing dead things back to life, what did *Pushing Daisies* lead character Ned do for a living?

**2008** Which actor links *Dr Horrible's Sing-A-Long Blog* with *The Big Bang Theory*?



**2009** Who created *Misfits* and wrote all but six episodes of its run?

**2010** Who fulfilled an Ood prophecy by knocking four times in David Tennant's final episode of *Doctor Who*?

**2011** Who replaced the Human Torch in the *Fantastic Four* after Johnny Storm's death?

**2012** What was the final novel published in the late, great Iain M Banks's *Culture* series?

**2013** Which author completed *The Wheel Of Time* series after the death of Robert Jordan?

**2014** Which author won pretty much every literary SF award going with *Ancillary Justice*?

**2015** Who took over as director of *Ant-Man* after Edgar Wright's much-publicised departure?

ANSWERS 1995 Gary Cole 1996 Dark Skies 1997 Kelly 1998 JJ Abrams 1999 Celia Imrie 2000 Oceanic Flight 815 2001 Willie Hitch 2002 Titanic and Ben-Hur 2003 Cortana 2004 Bryan Lumpkin (the postman) 2006 Doug Jones 2007 He bakes pies 2008 Simon Helberg 2009 Howard Overman 2010 Wilfred Molt 2011 Spider-Man 2012 The Hydrogen Sonata 2013 Brandon Sanderson 2014 Ann Leckie 2015 Peyton Reed

**HOW DID YOU DO?**  
Rate yourself by superhero movie



**0-5**  
Catwoman



**6-10**  
The Amazing Spider-Man 2



**11-15**  
X-Men: The Last Stand



**16-20**  
Iron Man



**21**  
The Dark Knight



# The World Of SFX

Don't stop here: there's always more for you to read...



## SFX ON GAMESRADAR+

► SFX's website home is now at **GamesRadar.com**, where you can find all manner of stuff that we can't fit in the regular magazine. Did you know, for instance, that we have daily news updates of what's hot in sci-fi and fantasy? Or that we're reviewing episodes of TV shows like *Game Of Thrones* there? You can also find new film and television features every day, competitions, trailers, film reviews and lots more besides. At **gamesradar.com** you also get coverage of videogames and non SF movies, but if it's sci-fi and fantasy you're after then make sure you bookmark **gamesradar.com/sfx**. Today!

## TOTAL FILM

► This issue *Total Film* goes blockbuster mad, starting with an exclusive visit to the set of *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* which features word from the likes of Joss Whedon, Mark Ruffalo, Robert Downey Jr and Ultron himself, James Spader. There's a massive summer blockbuster preview, Brad Bird takes us on a personal tour through *Tomorrowland*, and if you've ever wondered just how vulnerable action heroes would be in real life, the *TF* team has asked a cabal of doctors to review the footage. Bond wouldn't make it eight minutes through *Skyfall*...



## TWO FANTASTIC BOOKAZINES

► SFX and *Total Film* celebrate the return of *Game Of Thrones* in *The Ultimate Guide To Fantasy*, with a preview of season five, interviews, a sightseeing tour of King's Landing (aka Dubrovnik) and episode guides for seasons three and four. Other delights include lots on *Harry Potter* and Peter Jackson's Middle-earth hexalogy. Also out: *George Lucas The Ultimate Celebration*, which not only features classic content on *Star Wars*, but also Indiana Jones, *Labyrinth*, *Willow* and more (including that Duck!). They're both on sale now or you can order copies online, with free postage, at <http://bit.ly/filmguides>

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ISSUE 261 | JULY 2015

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Thanks to: Alun Pughe, Ian Clarke, Soriya Clayton, Margot Lohan, all the readers, contributors and friends who've helped make SFX the best sci-fi and fantasy mag in the universe for the last 20 years

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Printed in the UK by William Gibbons & Sons on behalf of Future

Distributed in the UK by Seymour Distribution Ltd

2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT Tel: 020 7429 4000

Overseas distribution by Seymour International

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Print: 20,304

Digital: 3,421

The ABC combined print, and digital circulation for Jan-Dec 2014 is  
**23,725**

A member of the Audited Bureau Of Circulations



Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR).  
[www.futureplc.com](http://www.futureplc.com)

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# PARK

*The future can be  
what it used to be...  
Joseph McCabe explores  
Tomorrowland:  
A World Beyond*







# LIFE



## THE FUTURE. IT'S THE

landscape at the heart of much of science fiction. A world of hope, possibility... and dread.

"In 2015, the future that you and I have inherited, the future that we're are looking at, is largely a dystopia," *Tomorrowland: A World Beyond* writer-producer Damon Lindelof tells *SFX*. "Movies and TV shows are basically presenting us with a world where sentient computers and robots have taken over and wiped out mankind. Environmental ruin, tidal waves and earthquakes have laid waste to the world. All of these things from *Planet Of The Apes* through *Blade Runner* through *The Terminator* through *The Matrix* through *The Hunger Games* are showing us a future that's not as pleasant as the future was back in the 1960s. Our movie basically asks the question, 'What happened? What happened to our jetpacks?'"

## A BLANK SLATE

To help answer that question, Lindelof – working with co-writer Jeff Jensen and director Brad Bird – has crafted a film that deals with "the very real, pragmatic, authentic presentation of the future as we see it now in 2015." At the same time, *Tomorrowland: A World Beyond* draws inspiration from the past, in particular the man who created the theme park attraction that gives the film its title: Walt Disney.

"I was having lunch with Sean Bailey, who had just become the President of Production over at Disney. Sean essentially said, 'What is

a live-action Disney movie these days? What do you think it is?' I said, 'Look, if I'm being completely honest with you, when I first heard that you guys were making *Pirates Of The Caribbean*, I thought it was ridiculous. Who wants to see a movie that's based on a theme park ride? But lo and behold, it ended up being a stroke of genius. Because Gore Verbinski and Johnny Depp totally nailed it and made a really entertaining and engaging movie. But more importantly, there's no real story attached to *Pirates Of The Caribbean*. You had an opportunity to make an original movie. You got to construct an entirely new mythology. It feels familiar, but you actually had a tremendous amount of space to come up with original ideas. So we should be doing more of that.' He said, 'What do you mean?' I said, 'Well, I would go and see a movie called *Tomorrowland*.'

"That conversation," explains Lindelof, "was the inception point. Because I felt like when you go into Tomorrowland in any Disney park, there is no story there. There are rides and there are attractions, but there's no sense of 'Who is the hero of this?' We had to come up with that from ground zero. As I started researching the history of not just Tomorrowland, but the parks themselves, the Imagineers and then of course Walt – who was probably the greatest visionary of the 20th century in many ways – backdooring into the World's Fairs, particularly the 1964 World's Fair in Flushing Meadows, New York... With everything that I learned I was just like, 'Oh my god. This has got to be a part of the backstory of this movie.' I just got completely and totally creatively engaged." ➔



To help develop the film's story, Lindelof partnered with Eisner Award-winning graphic novelist Jeff Jensen, who credits Disney's Epcot theme park in Florida for establishing *Tomorrowland's* underlying philosophy of technological optimism.

"The inspiration that we drew from," Jensen tells *SFX*, "was Walt Disney's original plan for what Epcot could be, what Epcot could look like. This idea of an experimental community of tomorrow, this sort of workshop for the future, a constantly changing place – because the future is always constantly in motion. A place where people from all walks of life, all industries – scientists, innovators, thinkers, artists, people of industry – get together and celebrate ideas in creative ways, and then take those ideas back to their communities, and maybe make their communities and towns better places.

## WHAT IF...?

"We were really engaged by that kind of idealism and that kind of mission. We thought, 'I want that city for real.' Ultimately, over time, the notion of what Epcot could be, should be, what it could realistically be, changed and evolved for the Walt Disney Company. But we loved the idea of 'What if Walt really secretly built that city somewhere out there? And what if he built it a long time ago? What is it and why hasn't it been shared with us? Who controls it?' That in many ways was a launching pad for what our story's about, the mystery of our movie. But also, 'If you were to actually go to Tomorrowland, what would be happening there?' That's where the inspiration led."

Like many of Lindelof's genre projects – from *Lost* to *Prometheus* – *Tomorrowland's* actual storyline is, for now, shrouded in secrecy. But when pressed, he tells *SFX* that

Pretty, sure, but we bet the traffic's a nightmare.



Britt Robertson plays Casey Newton, a young woman with a vision.



There's no such thing as too many televisions.



"Okay, so I've got a pass that means I don't have to queue anywhere..."



# DREAMING THE FUTURE

Production designer Scott Chambliss on creating a new vision of tomorrow...

**Did you reference the original theme park attraction when you were designing the movie?**

▮ Oddly enough, we didn't take any cues from the existing Tomorrowland. In fact, we specifically decided to avoid that. It didn't suit our story's purposes at all. The title is a bit misleading in that respect. Because it's the first thing you would think. But Tomorrowland in our movie is quite its own thing.

**There's a grand history of designing cities of the future. What informed Tomorrowland's aesthetic?**

▮ We started as urban planners. The writer, Damon Lindelof, created this wonderful, 35-page backstory of who in his mind the founders of Tomorrowland were. He posited that the greatest minds of the late 19th century until at least the first half of the 20th century got together to create this different version of city life. People like Edison and Tesla and Eiffel. Thirty different characters over the span of a few generations were supposedly the authors. With that,

we started conceiving, "Okay, what would they do together to make a coherent urban plan?" Then we just kept going... If technology continues evolving the way that it does, what we see in *Tomorrowland* could be a vision of the world 40 to 50 years from now, conceivably.

**What were the greatest design challenges you faced?**

▮ There were some large collaborative setpieces and locations that weren't always in *Tomorrowland*. The Eiffel Tower plays a big role in the movie, and also the 1964 World's Fair. In addition to the intricacy of all these different periods and styles that we had to manifest in great details - vehicles of the past, present, and future - the hardest thing was to make sure that these disparate time periods and environments worked together as opposed to starting to look like they were from different movies. It's all about keeping a coherent relationship between all of our times and places.

him and talk him into giving her a hand. But when she finds him he's not entirely willing to just roll over and take her there. He's got a slightly different opinion about this place than perhaps he once did. That's the mystery of the movie - what happened? What changed? What had that wonderful place that she glimpsed turned into?"

Jensen points out that, in addition to *Close Encounters*, *Tomorrowland: A World Beyond* also finds inspiration in a modern fantasy favourite.

"Like *Harry Potter* we have a story that involves a young hero learning about this mysterious other world. She's being called to it, or so she thinks. She enters into it and has an adventure there. But where *Harry Potter* is about magic, ours is about science and scientific possibility, and a lot of other things that are more allegorical. Tomorrowland stands for all things that can reside within the imagination, whether it's a great inventor coming up with the next great invention that's going to help the world, or an artist who's developing the next great piece of work, the next great story that's going to inspire the world. So yeah, we're *Harry Potter*-esque in that sense - that down-the-rabbit-hole, through-the-looking-glass, through-the-wardrobe kind of movie about another world."

Though *Tomorrowland: A World Beyond*, like JK Rowling's wizarding saga, has its "chosen one," Lindelof was determined to give that well-worn genre trope a fresh spin.

"With any movie of this size and scope, the stakes are huge. We didn't want *Tomorrowland* ➔

## "LIKE HARRY POTTER WE HAVE A YOUNG HERO LEARNING ABOUT THIS MYSTERIOUS OTHER WORLD"



Visions of tomorrow at the 1964 World's Fair.

this tale is in the grand tradition of screen science fiction.

"This is the story of a young woman [Casey Newton, played by *Under The Dome*'s Britt Robertson] who sees something. Who has a vision. It's not a spiritual vision, but one that's powered by technology. In the same way that Roy Neary had an encounter with a UFO [in *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*], this girl is very inspired by this place that she doesn't entirely understand. She's had a fleeting glimpse, and she wants to know more about it. In order to do so, she's gonna need help; and the person who is going to be her guide into this world is a man named Frank Walker, played by George Clooney. She's got to find



## "IF YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN MAKE THE FUTURE THEN YOU WILL"

to be any different. But we've come up with a slightly different spin on the whole 'chosen one' story, which has gotten a little bit tired I believe. It's a song that we all love to listen to, but one that's being played in a slightly different tempo. *The Matrix* is certainly a movie that Brad and I talked about as having done it beautifully in a sci-fi construct. But this is a story that we return to time and time again – this idea of being chosen by forces that are greater than yourself to help resolve this great battle between good and evil. We're aware of that story. We're kind of telling that story, but hopefully in a new and exciting way.

"As far as the *Harry Potter* of it all goes... Tomorrowland is not a school in the same way that Hogwarts is. But we love the idea that *Harry Potter* is set in the real world, a world where most people, most muggles, are not aware of the world of magic that is hidden from them. *Tomorrowland* uses a very similar language, except instead of magic it's technology and invention and innovation. That's where the *Harry Potter* parable kind of starts and ends. We don't have a Voldemort."

Though *Tomorrowland: A World Beyond* doesn't feature a school, Lindelof says the film itself serves as a celebration of education, particularly in the field of science.

"As pie-in-the-sky and as old-fashioned as this may sound, if you believe you can make the future then you will. But if you believe that the future is something that's going to happen to you, and that you have no power to change, then that's definitely what's going to happen. 'Why should I change my light bulbs? Why should I buy an electric car when the data says that with the pollution that the United States and China and South America



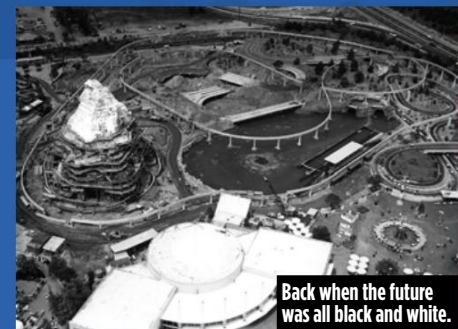
"What do you mean you've never seen *House*?"



Jetpacks! Finally!

## THE TRUE HISTORY OF TOMORROWLAND

Welcome to the wonderful world of Disney



Back when the future was all black and white.

► Tomorrowland welcomed its first visitors when Disneyland California opened on July 17, 1955, presenting a look at the world of 1986.

► In its first six years Tomorrowland also offered guests a tour of the original sets of Disney's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*.

► Disneyland's Monorail, Submarine Voyage and Matterhorn rides opened in Tomorrowland in 1959 during the park's "second opening".

► Before his death in 1966, Disney envisioned a "space port", which became, in 1977, Tomorrowland's most popular ride: Space Mountain.

► 1986 saw George Lucas partner with Disney when Tomorrowland acquired the *Star Wars*-centric Star Tours and Michael Jackson's Captain EO.

is putting out there, any choice that I make is inconsequential?" If everybody on the planet makes that decision it's going to have a direct effect on what environment our children are going to inherit. That's not old-fashioned. That's not corny. That's just fact.

"So how do you take this idea of the self-fulfilling prophecy about a clap to save Tinkerbell and infuse it into a movie without it feeling like we're demanding the entire world eat its vegetables? That was one of the challenges that the movie faced, and hopefully one that we've overcome. But it was really important to us as filmmakers to say, 'Hey, we want you to leave the movie theatre feeling a little bit more optimistic about what's in store for you.' But we also want to tell you that that's not going to happen without a little bit of elbow grease. The future is something that you've got to make happen.

"We hope that you're inspired," adds Lindelof. "But we also hope that you get out there and do something about it." **SFX**

*Tomorrowland: A World Beyond* opens on Friday 22 May.



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WORLD CHAMPION  
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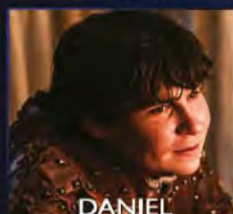
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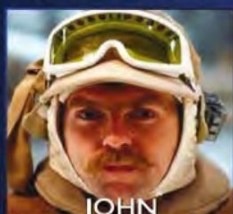
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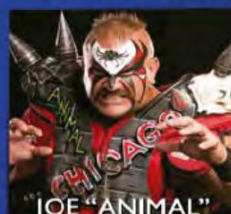
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# 20

THE  
GREATEST TV SHOWS OF SFX'S FIRST  
YEARS

In the second of our celebratory 20/20 features looking back at two decades of SFX, Jayne Nelson catalogues the sci-fi television of the period that we never wanted to miss

#sfx20

**S**FX HAS BEEN ON HAND TO CHART the rise and fall of many fantastic (and, let's face it, not-so-fantastic – hello *Crime Traveller*, *Demons* and *Krod Mandoon And The Flaming Sword Of Fire*) television shows over the past two decades. We've seen science fiction shows go from being a niche part of TV programming (*Farscape*, *Babylon 5*, *Firefly*) to hitting the mainstream so hard we're still feeling the repercussions (*The X-Files*, *Lost*, *Doctor Who*). We're sure you have your favourites – although not all of them might be present in this list – but here (in no particular order) are the 20 shows we believe have delivered the absolute best in small-screen fantasy from 1995 until today. Get your box sets ready now...

## DOCTOR WHO

Our favourite Time Lord's return to Saturday night prime-time has been a joy, from Christopher Eccleston telling everygirl Rose Tyler to "Run!" through to Peter Capaldi's Christmas Day attack-eyebrows. It's a delight to live in a world in which David Tennant cried "Allons-y!", Matt Smith waxed lyrical about bow ties and *John motherf\*\*king Hurt* was the bloody *Doctor*. And on top of all this goodness, thanks to Russell T Davies and Steven Moffat's life-long love of the show, 21st century *Doctor Who* feels utterly, unmistakably right.







A couple of old pals, the Doctor and Rose.



Do that for too long and your shins kill.

## THE X-FILES

Chris Carter's quirky FBI procedural soon became a bona fide phenomenon, bouncing from "monster of the week" (usually with memorable gore) to "paranoid conspiracy thriller" with gleeful abandon. Mulder's wry, open-minded Fed and his sceptical, rational partner Scully became pop culture archetypes – Welsh popsters Catatonia even took their names into the top 5 in 1997. Sure, all that bees and black oil business eventually became a drag but at its best *The X-Files* defined a deeply '90s strain of jittery telefantasy.

## GAME OF THRONES

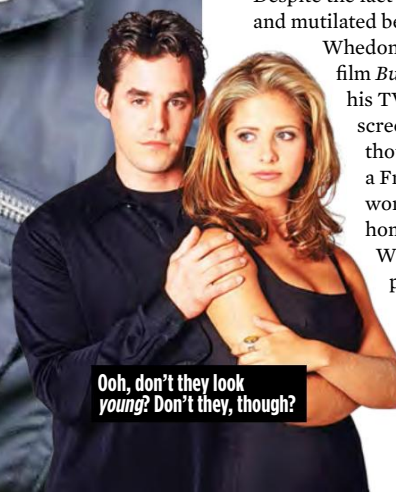
The prospect of adapting George RR Martin's mighty and complex fantasy tomes – still unfinished, of course – must have felt somewhat like climbing Mount Everest while only wearing slippers. But thankfully David Benioff and DB Weiss kept their footing and they've managed to make one of the truly great shows of the 21st century. Violent, intense and exotic, the fact that *Game Of Thrones* also features dragons is just a bonus.



Tyrion, Agent of Shield.

## BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

Despite the fact it was taken away from him and mutilated beyond all recognition, Joss Whedon never gave up on his 1992 film *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. When his TV take on the concept hit screens five years later, it was as though he'd managed to revive a Frankenstein's monster who wore lipstick, worried about her homework and killed demons. With witty wordplay, twisted plotting, deranged violence and harrowing losses, Miss Summers was in a class of her own.



Ooh, don't they look young? Don't they, though?



## 20 GREATEST TV SHOWS



Join us for a game of "Spot the Cylon".

## BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

Oh, how we laughed in 2003 when we heard that a new version of a '70s camp classic was coming to our screens! And oh, how we all boggled when we sat down to watch it and found a cerebral, intelligent and utterly compelling drama series that played out as an analogy of the western world's post-9/11 angst! *BSG* was an incredible creation, filled with believable characters, sublime performances and devastating heartbreak. The only thing "camp" about it was the internment camp the Cylons used to detain their human prisoners.

## FIREFLY

It's difficult to think of *Firefly* without feeling a pang of grief for its short-lived existence. But this plucky little space-opera Western certainly did a lot in its short time on this Earth (or off it). From Nathan Fillion's impossibly wisecracking Captain to Summer Glau's enigmatic River; to the vocal tics and phrases that litter gorram popular culture to this day; to the FX tricks and tropes that are now commonplace, *Firefly* lived up to its name. It lived a short life, but boy, did it burn bright.

## LIFE ON MARS

This is the show that made us all think about the fact that dog poop used to be white. But that's the kind of series *Life On Mars* was: a nostalgic look back at a time when Britain was very different, right down to its doggy do. John Simm and Philip Glenister became the perfect cop combo in a series that had a lot of fun with its time-travel concept in what was otherwise a police-procedural, and it even spawned a decent spin-off, *Ashes To Ashes*.

## BABYLON 5

With an audacious set-up (a space station serving as the universe's "last, best hope for peace"), an array of aliens later rivalled only by *Farscape*, all of them utterly bewitching, and a fascinating central mystery that played out in the kind of arc-plot only rarely seen on television in the mid-'90s, *Babylon 5* was one helluva show. It also had some of the greatest characters and situations in sci-fi history (G'Kar and Londo's relationship being the biggest highlight). Most of all, however: it had balls.

## STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

The flip side of *Babylon 5*, *Deep Space Nine* chose to take a slightly calmer route through the seas of standard, Gene Roddenberry-inspired sci-fi. For a while, at least... After a couple of middling seasons all hell broke loose: Sisko grew a beard, the Cardassians attacked, hordes of bad guys came flying out of a nearby wormhole and suddenly *Star Trek* became a war zone. With some exceptionally intelligent writing, phenomenal performances and knock-out twists, this is arguably the best *Trek* of the lot.

## FRINGE

Launching in 2008 from the then-dream team of JJ Abrams, Roberto Orci and Alex Kurtzman, *Fringe* suffered at first from inevitable comparisons to *The X-Files*: government agents are sent to investigate mysterious phenomena. However, soon it set the bar so high that Mulder and Scully couldn't even have seen it with binoculars, thanks to doppelgangers, parallel worlds and a widening net of entropy threatening to destroy entire universes. *Fringe* never, ever played it safe – particularly in its bizarre final season – and we will love it forever for that.



Um, fancy a game of five-a-side?

## IN THE FLESH

One thing that has been a recurring theme in *SFX*'s lifetime is "fantastic shows cancelled before their time". Alas, *In The Flesh* is one of these (curse you, BBC!). A thoroughly British take on a post-apocalyptic, zombie-filled world, it dealt with complex issues such as sexual identity, PTSD and the effect of suicide on a small community in a sensitive and affecting way, and could be heart-stoppingly tense, hilarious and desolating in a single episode. Gloriously written, poignant and much, much missed.

## ANGEL

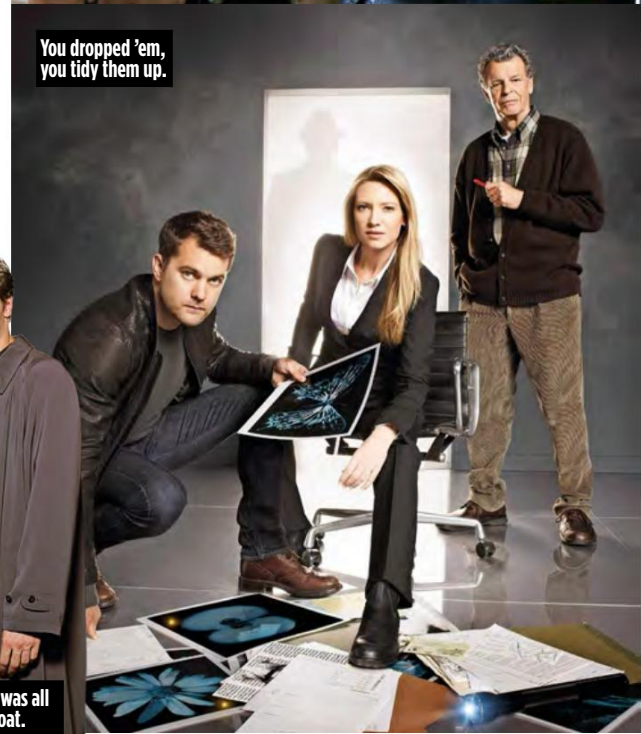
Sure, David Boreanaz's vampire Angel was hugely watchable in *Buff*. But once he had his own show... well, this particular creature of the night rapidly went from "watchable" to "necessary". *Angel* started off as a detective yarn,



Galaxy Quest: The TV Series. Only jesting.



Two fellas you can rely on for violence and humour.



You dropped 'em, you tidy them up.

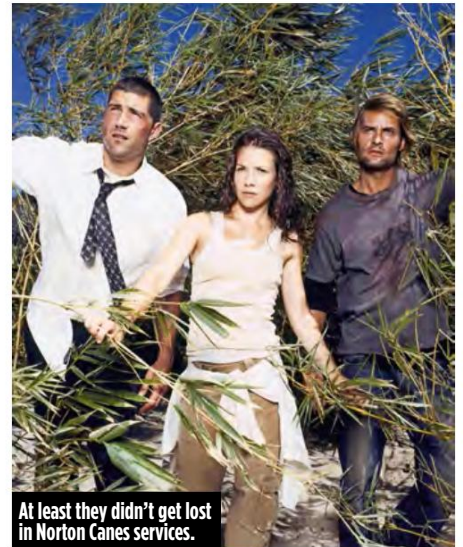
The coat, it was all about the coat.







*Firefly's* Captain Mal Reynolds: avoids standing on cracks.



At least they didn't get lost in Norton Canes services.

segued into a dark, broody revenge drama and ended up as, well, *The Office* (only bloodier). Through all these changes, a solid cast, scintillating dialogue and characters who soon felt like family members kept us hooked.

## LOST

What an incredible feat *Lost* pulled upon its launch in 2004, eh? Pitched as a mystery drama series about a bunch of passengers stranded on an island after a plane crash, it soon unspooled into a surreal fantasy that featured everything from smoke monsters to time travel. Viewers who would never have given a fantasy show the time of day found themselves sucked in, and thus *Lost* became the biggest show in the world. Some may quibble with the ending, true, but you can't deny it was a bloody good ride.

## MISFITS

Bitchy, foul-mouthed, obnoxious, scatological, obscene, gross, offensive... Yes, we just raided our thesaurus to sum up this brilliant little E4 show, and much like *Misfits* itself, we regret nothing. Sure, it was designed to shock – and shock it did, in ways ranging from bloody deaths to bizarre sex scenes – but mostly *Misfits* was a plea from the oddball members of the younger generation to have their voices heard, and f\*\*k you if you don't listen. In short, these guys were council estate X-Men with Asbos and bad attitudes. And they were fabulous.



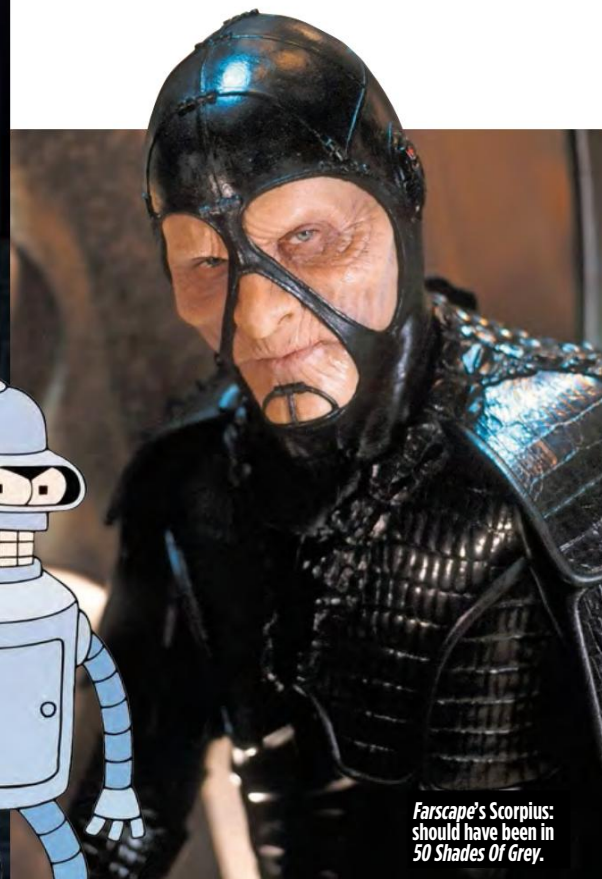
"At least you're not one of Santa's elves!"



# 20 GREATEST TV SHOWS



If only every back alley was as exciting as this.



## BEING HUMAN

A vampire, a werewolf and a ghost walk into a house... and there's no punchline, really, because what happens next are five seasons of angst, gruesomeness, hilarity and heartbreak (oh, and a Canadian/American remake which really didn't manage to live up to the original). *Being Human* was all about people who are different through no fault of their own trying desperately to fit into society – and failing miserably. The cast changed as the show went on, but the original triumvirate of Mitchell, Annie and George were never bettered.



## BLACK MIRROR

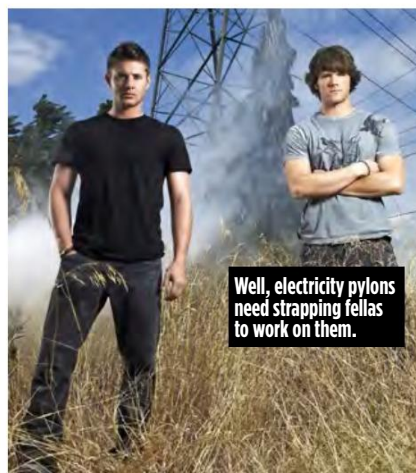
Charlie Brooker's anthology series *Black Mirror* may have only done seven episodes but almost all of them have had at least one gutpunch moment: from the sight of Britain's Prime Minister being blackmailed into boffing a pig in "The National Anthem" to last Christmas's transformation of *that* Wizzard song into pure, dripping horror. Biting, caustic, downright vicious – and often very funny – this is *The Twilight Zone* on ketamine.

## FUTURAMA

Arguably even better than sister show *The Simpsons* (gasp!), *Futurama* was a nostalgic, warm-hearted 'toon that was basically a love letter to all the sci-fi clichés we grew up with, from robots to rayguns to evil doubles with goatees. Like *Star Trek*, it had an extraordinary ability to come back from cancellation time and again – and even featured the Enterprise crew as disembodied heads. It also starred a terrifying, power-mad amphibian who was... er... no, wait... oh... **ALL GLORY TO THE HYPNOTOAD!**

## SUPERNATURAL

As Kansas sang to Dean and Sam Winchester back in season one, "Carry on, my wayward son!" And carry on they did, for 10 – soon to be 11 – seasons. In fact, the Winchesters have been "saving people, hunting things" for so long now that they've almost become part of the furniture – yet somehow, even after a



decade, the writers are still conjuring fascinating adventures for them.

Most recently, this happened in a brilliant 200th episode that thanked the fans for carrying on, too. Awww.

## FARSCAPE

Out of all the shows on this list, *Farscape* wins the prize for being the one it would be most terrifying to watch on an acid trip. That's because each episode feels like an acid trip without any pharmaceutical help: bonkers from start to finish, with a cast of characters that look like something Jim Henson dreamt up in a fevered nightmare. The fact *Farscape* managed to gather all this craziness together and create an engrossing, unmissable drama series about *people* is still a wonder to us.

## THE WALKING DEAD

Surely one of the most brutal shows on this list, *The Walking Dead* is also one of the most revered – mostly for not being afraid to push the boundaries of American television, as an R-rated show with full-on gore that isn't afraid to kill off characters left, right and centre. Also unafraid to veer off from its comic-book roots, *TWD* is that rare beast: a series about shambling, undead monsters in which the actual *living humans*, and the moral choices they make, are scarier than the zombies.

Agree with our choices?  
Vote on the list at  
[gamesradar.com/sfx-20](http://gamesradar.com/sfx-20).  
Next issue: Films.





# WIN! A DALEK

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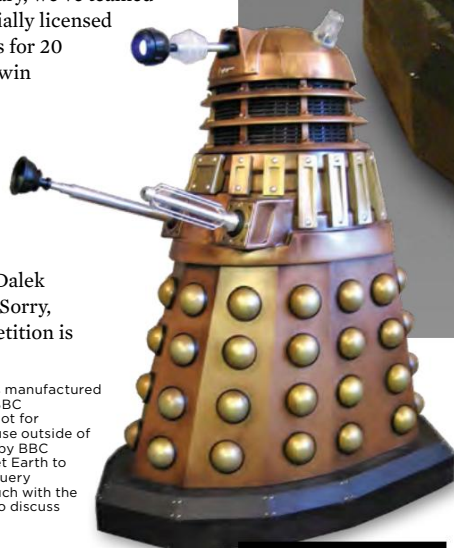
**A full-size replica Dalek from This Planet Earth could be yours**

**O**KAY, WE KNOW THAT DALEKS aren't the sort of houseguests you'd normally invite into your home. But imagine the chance to have one of Skaro's finest in your living room – surely it's worth the risk of being exterminated to have the ultimate sci-fi ornament sitting next to you as you watch TV.

To mark *SFX*'s 20th anniversary, we've teamed up with This Planet Earth, officially licensed *Doctor Who* replica prop makers for 20 years, to give you the chance to win your very own replica Dalek. It comes in the beautiful bronze livery introduced for the show's 2005 return, has a glowing blue eye stalk, and would be worth more than £3,500 if you bought it yourself! What's more, the winner will get their Dalek delivered direct to their home. (Sorry, overseas readers, but this competition is only open to UK residents.)

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Make your friends jealous!  
Exterminate your enemies!



Unfortunately we can't guarantee that it'll fly.

## HOW TO ENTER

To enter the competition, you'll need to supply correct answers to all three of these Dalek-related questions:

**1 What's the name of the Daleks' home planet?**

- A Skaro**
- B Mondas**
- C Telos**

**2 Which alien race was mutated to create Daleks?**

- A Thal**
- B Kaled**
- C Ogron**

**3 What name was given to the British army Daleks in "Victory Of The Daleks"?**

- A Metaltrons**
- B Ironsides**
- C Trundlers**

Head to [www.futurecomps.co.uk/winadalek](http://www.futurecomps.co.uk/winadalek) to enter.  
**Closing date: 26 May 2015**

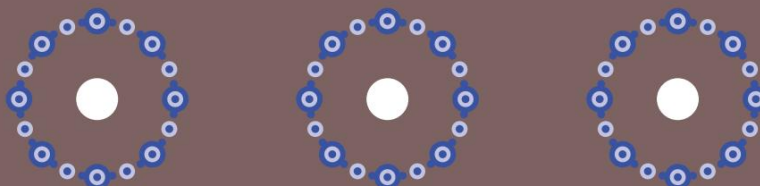


**TERMS AND CONDITIONS** You can enter the competition online at [www.futurecomps.co.uk/winadalek](http://www.futurecomps.co.uk/winadalek) between Wednesday 29 April 2015 and 11.59pm on Tuesday 26 May 2015. Prize is as stated and cannot be transferred or refunded. No cash alternative will be offered. The winner will be selected at random from all the correct entries received between the relevant dates and the winner will be notified within 28 days of the closing date. Free entry, as well as full terms and conditions, are available online at [www.futurecomps.co.uk/winadalek](http://www.futurecomps.co.uk/winadalek). Please note that we cannot accept postal entries. This competition is open to all UK residents aged 18 or over, except employees of: (a) the Promoter; (b) any third party appointed by the Promoter to organise and/or manage the competition; and (c) the Competition Sponsor. By entering this competition, you consent to the Promoter and the Competition Sponsor using your personal details to send you information about their respective products and services which may be of interest to you. If you do not want to receive this information, please specify while entering online. Promoter: Future Publishing Limited, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. Competition Sponsor: This Planet Earth, PO Box 87, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 5GA. By taking part in this competition you agree to be bound by the terms and conditions above and the competition rules which can be found at [www.futurecomps.co.uk/winadalek](http://www.futurecomps.co.uk/winadalek).



# THE TIME OF THEIR LIVES

*Doctor Who* executive producer Brian Minchin gives Nick Setchfield a glimpse of what's in store when the TARDIS rematerialises this year



**You launched Peter Capaldi very successfully last year. How do you build on that success now?**

⦿ This series we're telling the next stage of the adventure. It's the glory years of Peter Capaldi's Doctor and Clara. As you saw in the finale and the Christmas episode he's kind of answered his question of "Am I a good man?" and this year he's having the time of his life, having dangerous and exciting adventures in time and space. These are the glory days of the Doctor and Clara. They're having the biggest, most dangerous adventures they've ever had and they're having great fun doing it.

**What's your ambition for this series?**

⦿ Everything is based on the character of the Doctor. Interesting, intelligent TV characters evolve, and you see different sides to them. I suppose the mission statement we had was bigger adventures, and to go further in space and time. We've got a very confident Doctor, we've got a very confident companion and they're both experts at doing this now so we can tell slightly bigger stories. We're doing more two-parters – and not just conventional two-parters. We're doing linked stories where you might not be sure how they're going to be connected until you see them. We're pushing the storytelling that way, to give us more scale of adventure.

**So will some episodes end with a surprise cliffhanger?**

⦿ You'll need to see the episodes to see how we're doing it. We love cliffhangers, and we love them being in there, but we also like it when stories develop into something unexpected, and connect in unusual ways.

**Does that change the rhythm of your storytelling?**

⦿ A little bit. We're still fast-paced, we're still funny, we've still got danger. Each episode works on its own. Steven [Moffat] always likes to push himself and this is a slightly new thing for him. I think Steven really enjoyed writing the two-part finale last



Once *The Impossible Girl*, now *The Girl Who Waited Around*.

series and he could see what that could do – it allows you to have guest characters in for a bit longer, it allows you to do different things on a production scale, it allows you to do different things with monsters.

**Is Peter looking to explore new sides to the Doctor this year?**

⦿ It's something that isn't good to analyse too much, because we want to let things happen in the stories, but Peter's a very intelligent actor who always wants to be doing something new with the character. If you asked any leading man or lady they wouldn't want to just be doing the same thing. Peter has a huge understanding of the Doctor and there are aspects that he wanted to play this year, in these stories. But he's very reactive. We have these big conversations but it always comes down to what's in the story, what's in the script.

**Steven said that he's writing a funnier Doctor this year. Are you looking to give Peter more comedy?**

⦿ It comes back to what I said – he's answered that question of "Am I a good man?" He's still the same Doctor. It's Peter Capaldi being the Doctor, and he's brilliant. He came out as the Doctor questioning himself, but he's now having the time of his life. That's how we talk about it. It's got to come from an artistic place of where the Doctor's at now.

**He was quite a formidable figure last year, which was a gamble that Steven took, making him slightly fierce and slightly prickly. Will we see more of that side or have you softened him?**

⦿ I'd say that one of the great strengths of Peter Capaldi as the Doctor is that he's unpredictable, and you're never sure which way he's going to turn – which is a thing a lot of the classic Doctors have had, and that isn't going away.

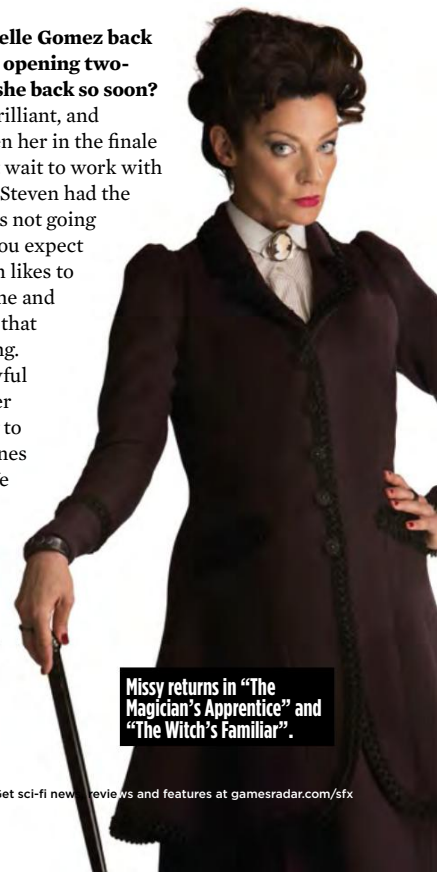
**Jenna Coleman really came into her own as Clara last series. How happy are you that she's staying on?**

⦿ Absolutely delighted. It's brilliant. It's a series that we always wanted to tell, of Peter's Doctor with Clara, so we're delighted that it's happening.

**You have Michelle Gomez back as Missy in the opening two-parter. Why is she back so soon?**

⦿ Missy is brilliant, and having seen her in the finale we just couldn't wait to work with Michelle again. Steven had the perfect story. It's not going to be Missy as you expect her to be. Steven likes to surprise everyone and he's going to do that with this opening. Missy has an awful lot of sides to her and we're going to see some new ones in this series. We also learn a bit more about her relationship with the Doctor... **SFX**

*Doctor Who* returns to BBC One later this year.



Missy returns in "The Magician's Apprentice" and "The Witch's Familiar".





**“WE’RE DOING  
LINKED STORIES  
WHERE YOU MIGHT NOT  
BE SURE HOW THEY’RE  
GOING TO BE CONNECTED”**



# Taking Leave of Roundworld

● PORTRAIT BY JESSE WILD

Some of those who knew him best discuss  
Sir Terry Pratchett's  
life and legacy.  
Jonathan Wright listens in





**TERRY PRATCHETT**





# TERRY PRATCHETT

## N 2007, SIR TERRY

Pratchett was diagnosed with posterior cortical atrophy (PCA), a rare form of early onset Alzheimer's disease.

He raged against the prospect of his "embuggerance" taking away his sense of self and campaigned for assisted dying to be made legal. He wanted, he said, to die in his own garden at a time of his own choosing, with a glass of brandy in his hand.

But to the relief of those closest to Terry, the end came naturally and very peacefully. After a slow and gradual decline, Terry's health failed rapidly in his last few months. On 12 March 2015, in the words of Rob Wilkins, the novelist's business manager and close friend for close to two decades, "Terry died at home with Pongo the Cat laying on his bed, surrounded by his family, and he just went to sleep." The music of Thomas Tallis played.

Somehow, against all odds, Terry remained brilliantly creative almost to the end. He met Death with nine "really solid ideas" for new *Discworld* novels in hand. "I'm mourning the loss of my friend, but I'm also now mourning the loss of those words that I know will never be written," Wilkins tells *SFX*.

He's not alone. Speaking to some of those who knew Terry best for this tribute, interviews conducted in the raw days after the funeral, a recurring theme is a sense of wonder – and that's really not putting it too strongly – at the fiction he crafted.

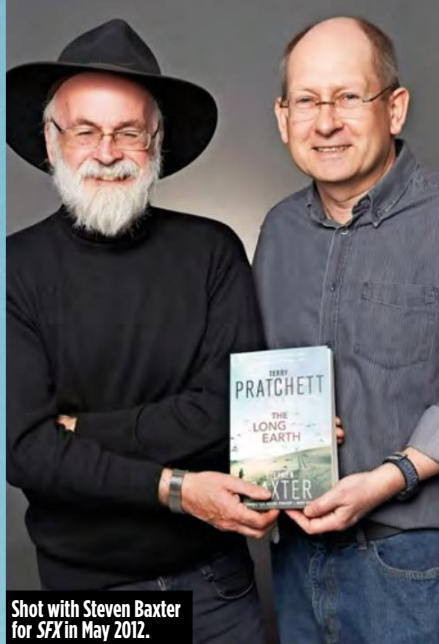
A story from 2009 illustrates the nature of his talent. Two years after he'd been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, Terry was at work on *Unseen Academicals*. Editor Philippa Dickinson had produced "a timeline of doom" to make sure the story worked. It didn't: there was too much plot for the novel's timescale. "We had to dissect the whole story to get a new day in," recalls Rob.

The two began work at around 9am. Sometime after 5pm, Terry, who had spent the day pacing his office and dictating changes, asked a "peaky" Rob whether he was feeling okay. Rob, who hadn't moved all day even to visit the toilet, went through to the kitchen – and threw up.

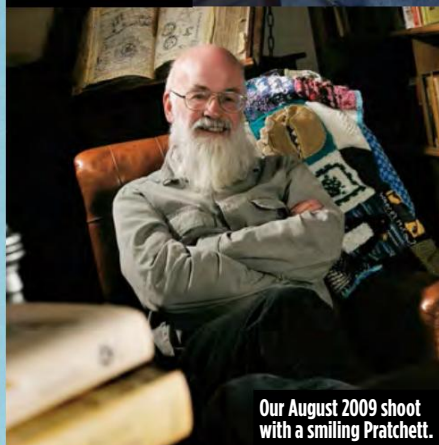
"I'd given myself a migraine, and yet there was Terry with PCA scrolling 135,000 words backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, and at the click of his fingers he could take himself to any point within the story, and that recall was so amazing to see," says Rob. "But he could just do that, he knew exactly where he had to drop something in – and he knew the ripples that dropping the pebble in at that point in the story would have throughout the whole story."

## ONLY CHILD

As to how Terence David John Pratchett came to hone this ability, it wasn't via any conventional route. He was born on 28 April 1948 in Beaconsfield, Bucks, the only child of David and Eileen Pratchett. As Terry told me in an interview in 2011, he was a bright kid but one who was "always round the middle of the class". He couldn't see the point in reading: "It



Shot with Steven Baxter for *SFX* in May 2012.



Our August 2009 shoot with a smiling Pratchett.

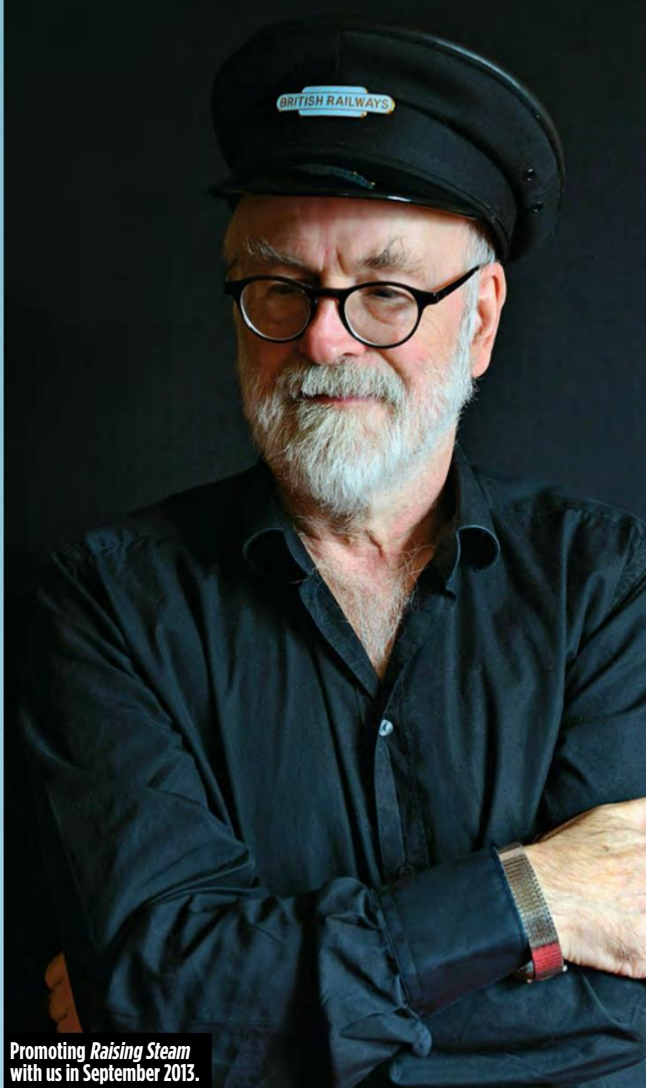
was like maths, it wasn't something you really needed." His mum had other ideas and bribed him to read. Words became a passport to, initially at least, the means to buy Blackjacks and Sherbet Fountains.

Then a friend of the family, uncle Don, gave him a copy of *The Wind In The Willows*. It was "really good shit". Something changed. "That was it," Terry remembered. "I mean the line to becoming a writer, you can put a ruler across my life and you can see the line."

On leaving school, Terry went to work on the *Bucks Free Press* as a trainee reporter. In 1968, he was sent to interview author Peter Bander van Duren about a book on education, *Looking Forward To The Seventies*, which was how Terry came to meet his first publisher, and later his literary agent, Colin Smythe. He mentioned he'd written a novel, *The Carpet People*, which he gave to Smythe to read. "There was really no way we couldn't publish it," Smythe recalls. "Here was something written by a 17-year-old, and it was amazing."

The novel appeared in 1971, but it wouldn't be until a dozen years later, with the publication of the first *Discworld* novel, *The Colour Of Magic*, that Terry began to find success. In this period, Terry made his living from journalism and, later, as a press officer for the Central Electricity Generating Board, reassuring the public that nuclear energy was safe. He married Lyn in 1968, and the couple's only daughter, Rhianna, was born in 1976.

Terry worked on his fiction in the evenings when the nights drew in. In the summer, he



Promoting *Raising Steam* with us in September 2013.

spent his time gardening. "He said I used to pay him advances that could just about buy him a greenhouse," says Smythe, who remembers Terry specialising in "exotic things that didn't grow quite as well in England as the companies flogging the seeds said they would".

The years in journalism instilled a fierce work ethic. "He always said 'I do not understand people with writer's block'," says Smythe. "He said, 'If you have been a newspaper reporter, you have that page, that large blank page, and that's got to be finished in three quarters of an hour, it's got to be filled.'"

So why did the *Discworld* novels connect in a way that Terry's previous books didn't? It certainly didn't hurt that *Colour Of Magic* was broadcast as a serial on Radio 4's *Women's Hour*, in 1985. Good timing helped too. Just as Douglas Adams' work connected with readers already familiar with SF tropes, the early



A young aspiring novelist, around the time of writing *The Carpet People* in 1970.



The early 1990s and The Hat has appeared!

REX (3)



*Discworld* novels found a receptive audience steeped in high fantasy, people who got the gags. When these readers discovered the books, they told their friends.

Terry understood the importance of these word-of-mouth recommendations because he'd been a convention-attending fan himself – an “irritating teenager” with “huge glasses” remembered Michael Moorcock when I interviewed him last year. Until his fame made it impossible because of the sheer weight of correspondence, Terry replied to readers' letters personally. “He liked his fans. That's the big thing, he really did,” says Jason Anthony, who edits the *Discworld Monthly* newsletter, and sometimes found himself given insider information, so long as confidences were respected. “He used to say to me: ‘Unlike God, I don't forgive,’” says Anthony.

But this strong connection with fans doesn't explain the sustained success of the *Discworld* novels over more than three decades. Instead, you need to look at the way the books moved from farce – inept wizard Rincewind running away from the many situations he encountered that might result in his demise – to becoming far richer, with morally complex characters in lead roles, such as copper Sam Vimes and formidable witch Granny Weatherwax.

Farah Mendlesohn, professor of literary history at Anglia Ruskin University, says we need to see Terry as a satirist rather than a humourist. “When you hear people quote Pratchett, it's almost always his ethical one-liners,” she says. The best of Terry's books, Mendlesohn adds, work as extended story jokes that spiral inwards, a technique also employed by comedians Joyce Grenfell and Victoria Wood in their monologues. “The humour comes from the relentless logic of a scenario,” she says. “That happens to go very well with moral exploration. The two things go side by side, I don't think they're separable.”

Here is the Pratchett Neil Gaiman describes in his foreword to the non-fiction collection *A Slip Of The Keyboard*, not a cuddly fellow, but a man driven by “anger” rooted “in an underlying sense of what is fair and what is not”.

The books were also clever, written by an autodidact who supplemented his own knowledge with a phone book filled with the numbers of people who could answer arcane enquiries. Mathematician Professor Ian Stewart, co-writer of *The Science Of Discworld* books with Terry and biologist Professor

## Not a cuddly fellow, but a man driven by “anger” rooted “in an underlying sense of what is fair and what is not”

Jack Cohen, recalls Terry calling him up to ask a question about thermodynamics: “If something got really, really hot, so hot that the temperature passed infinity, would it then become extraordinarily cold?” Theoretically, Stewart replied, yes. “Oh good, because I've got this magic sword...”

Bernard Pearson of the Discworld Emporium, aka the Cunning Artificer and a former copper (“not a very good copper, but I grew the best crop of cannabis in any police station garden”) whose experiences found their way into the *Watch* books, says of Terry: “He listened like a Hoover.”

### EXPANDING UNIVERSE

As the 1990s gave way to a new millennium, Terry's fame spread beyond genre fans. The last time anyone checked, he'd sold more than 85m books. He didn't always find this level of success easy. An essentially private and shy man, he could come across as sharp and difficult on days when things weren't going well. He liked to test your mettle too. If I ever hesitated during an interview, a recurring refrain was, “It's your job to ask me a question.”

Yet he was also great fun to be around. I'd also echo TV producer Rod Brown's words: “We would have lunch and he would recount the stories he was writing, and the stories in his mind, and I'd have paid money to be in those experiences.” An afternoon when Terry discussed both his childhood and visiting the Swiss Dignitas clinic for a BBC documentary remains imprinted on my memory.

Besides, if he was sometimes tough on other people, his own standards were equally high. Bernard Pearson describes him as a craftsman, someone who took “more trouble to do something than anybody else thinks worthwhile”. This is why *Discworld* merchandise hasn't thus far been licensed for mass production.

Terry didn't need the money and he preferred to keep control over spin-offs from his fictional world. He and Pearson would concoct ideas between them, with the golden

rule that everything had to be “real”, made properly. “He held us to it,” says Pearson. “Occasionally, I'd go and see him [with a new item], and he'd say, ‘That's not very clever, is it?’ And it would not be because I'd cut corners but because... I'd tried to cut corners!”

So things might have gone on happily and indefinitely, except in 2007, with his PCA diagnosis, the extraordinary final act of Terry's life began. He used his fame – and his intellect, money, time and sheer cussedness too – to campaign both for the right to an assisted death and for more research to be undertaken into finding new treatments for Alzheimer's.

In doing this, he became not just famous but a celebrity, and it's perhaps not been remarked upon often enough just how downright brave this was. It wasn't a natural role for a man who was happier spending time around those he knew best, let alone someone also living in the shadow of a degenerative disease.

The words continued to flow, including more *Discworld* books, the *Long Earth* novels co-written with Steve Baxter and snippets of autobiography that may yet, according to Colin Smythe, be glued together into a book.

He took care of business too. According to Rod Brown, managing director of Narrativia, the company that now holds the rights to adapt Terry's work, there will be film and TV shows. These are big-budget projects and, having announced *The Watch* series at an early stage only to hit delays, Brown says, “We'd rather tell people when we're turning over on [adaptations] because then they're as real as they possibly could be.”

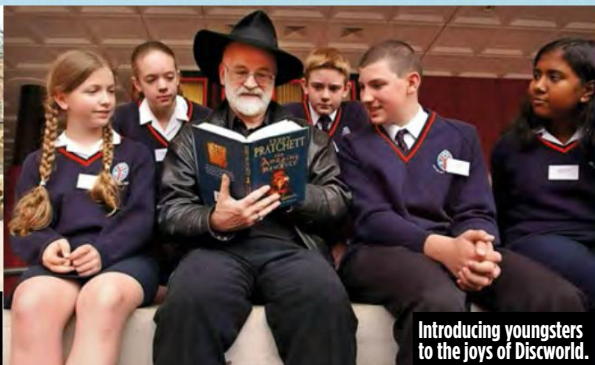
The final year was hard. Terry, says Rob, no longer saw how the ripples would play out through the whole story when a pebble was dropped. Towards the end, Terry would dictate from a reclining sofa, positioned so that Rob often couldn't see him behind a computer screen. One day, as Terry was dictating what will be the final *Discworld* novel, the forthcoming *Shepherd's Crown*, Rob suggested the lines he'd come up with wouldn't quite do the trick.

“There was laughter from the other side of the screen,” says Rob. “Rhianna was visiting, and I said, ‘What is it?’ And I stood up and looked at them both, they were whispering between themselves, and Rhianna said, ‘Dad's just realised he's working for you now!’”

Terry's humanist funeral was held a fortnight after his death. It was a private service for family and close friends, but there will be a memorial later in the year. “He wanted horses with plumes and a classic Victorian hearse, and he got that,” says Rob. I don't think I'm alone in hoping that one of the horses, the nag wondering why he wasn't working with the big skinny chap today, was called Binky. **SFX**



On set of *The Colour Of Magic*, with fans as extras, snapped by SFX in 2007.

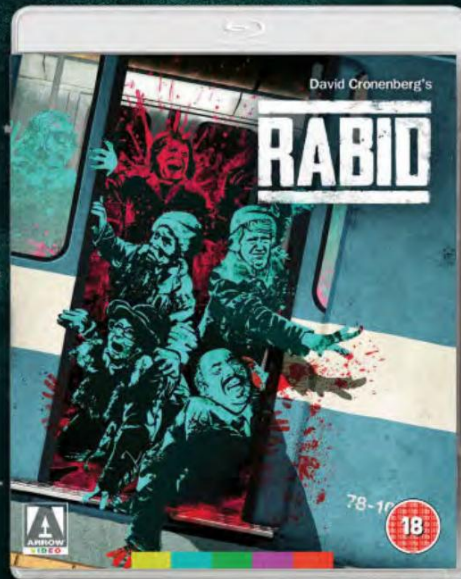
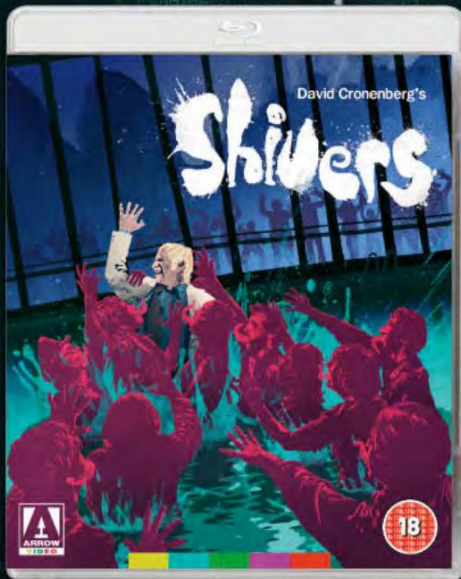
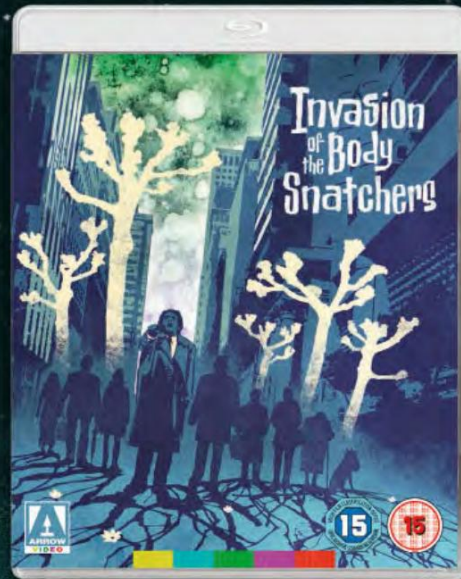


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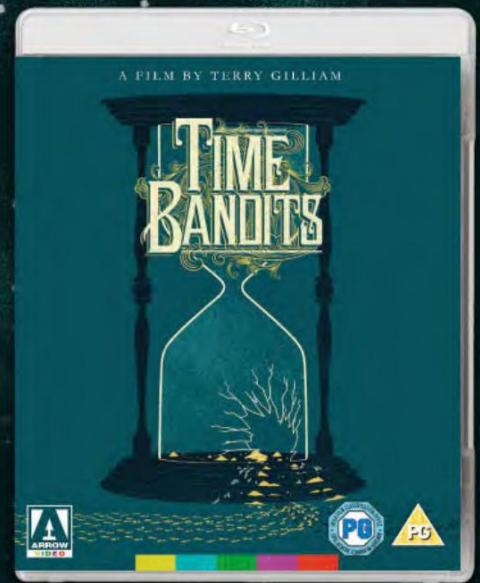
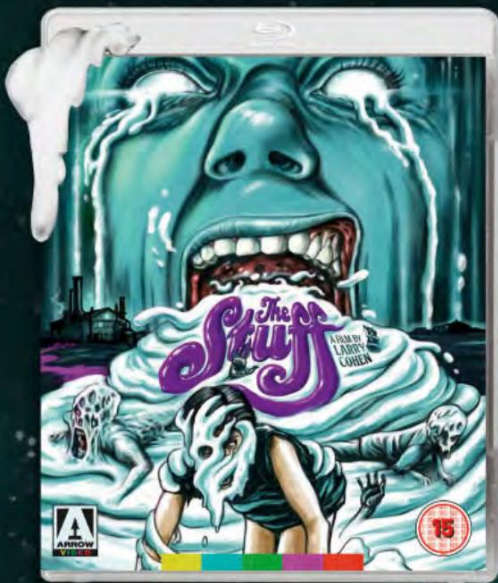
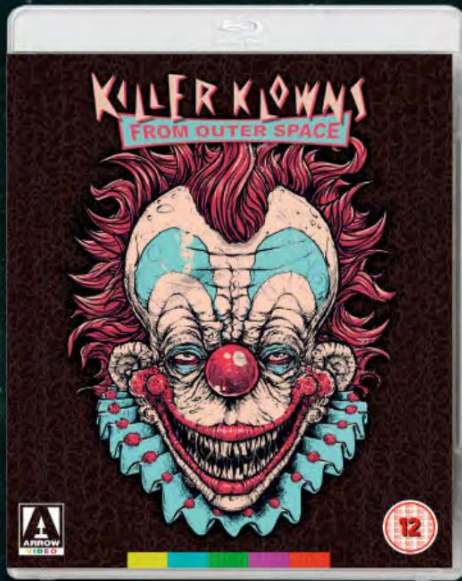


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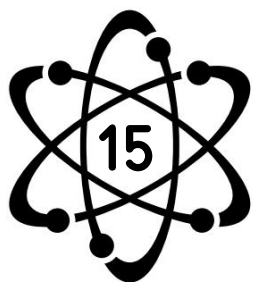
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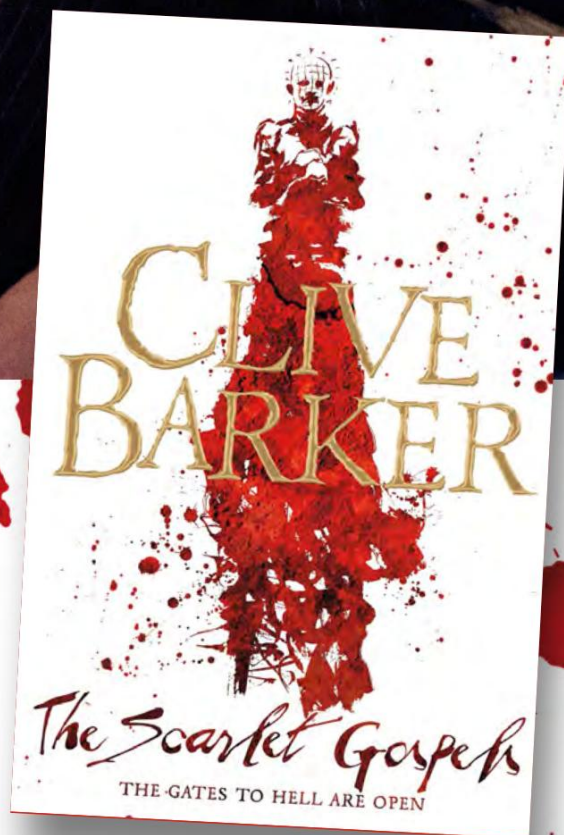
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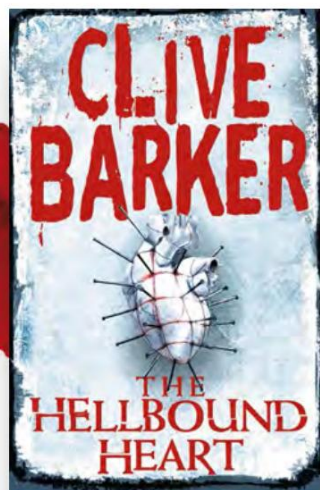


# The Gospel Truth

Master of horror Clive Barker tells Joseph McCabe all about bringing two of his greatest creations back to the page



Few tales of modern horror have been so impactful as Clive Barker's "The Hellbound Heart". The author's acclaimed 1986 novella introduced the extra-dimensional sadomasochistic Cenobites; the most famous of which – thanks to Barker's own 1987 film adaptation *Hellraiser* – became the pop-culture icon known as Pinhead. Yet the ever forward-looking Barker refused to cash in on the popularity of his creations, and, rather than pen or direct a string of Cenobite sequel stories, moved on to other projects, some of which featured his haunted occult detective Harry D'Amour, introduced in his short story "The Last Illusion", and on screen in his 1995 adaptation *Lord Of Illusions*.



Now Barker is bringing his most popular characters together in *The Scarlet Gospels*, which positions the two as mortal adversaries. The novel depicts Pinhead as one of the primary reasons for Harry's unique career path, and finds the demonic entity attempting a complete takeover of Hell. In fusing the two worlds, Barker has attempted one of those rare works that functions as both a gift to fans and the realisation of a personal vision. But when he speaks with *SFX* from his home in Beverly Hills, he tells us he paid little mind

to such peripheral concerns when writing.

"I only know one way to experience the writing," he says, "and it's always damned enjoyable. The excitement of writing is that I generally have no idea where I'm going next. I'm usually just along for the ride. If I stepped outside of that and thought about what these characters mean in response to some sort of zeitgeist, I'd be doing myself and the readers, I feel, a great disservice."

Since much of *The Scarlet Gospels* takes place within Hell, and presents Barker's most thorough investigation yet into its landscape and hierarchy, we ask him how long the ideas it incorporates have been percolating in his mind.

"Does forever count?" he laughs. "Seriously, I have wanted to share this vision of Hell for



We can't help wondering if he once had a bad acupuncture experience.





REX (1)

as far back as I can remember... I grew up in a post-war Europe, and that always seemed far more immediate and terrible than any Dantean depiction of Hell as this very tidy place with nine circles, each of which is cordoned off to special kinds of suffering or damnations. The apocalypse will not be organised. Why then should The Pit? It seems to me that if Hell exists, it would be like the Warsaw ghettos as run by the Nazis."

Barker has said that *The Scarlet Gospels* began as a sequel novella to "The Hellbound Heart", but that as the project developed he saw in it the potential for a novel.

"Keeping in step with the themes here, the original model for Pinhead was the Nazis. Himmler, specifically. Here was a man who had occult ties and a fiendishly sadistic side, but somehow kept himself at arm's length from the 'unseemly' side of the Holocaust. For god's sake, he once went to a concentration camp and passed out because blood got on his glasses. That's a fascinating psyche, and I've never really been able to shake the imagery loose. Pair that with the fact that I thought it was time the bastard got what he deserved, and it becomes undeniable that there's a story wanting to be told. It became a novel when the story informed me that there was a much bigger plot afoot. Books are funny that way."

**"The excitement of writing is that I generally have no idea where I'm going next. I'm just along for the ride"**

Harry D'Amour's involvement, however, was always a part of *The Scarlet Gospels*.

"Oh yes. Always. Harry shows up in a lot of my books, and he's had an appointment with Mr Head that was rather longstanding. It seems to me that Harry and Pinhead are complementary souls. Blake's *The Everlasting Gospels* – an undeniable inspiration, as you can likely see by the title alone – says, 'Both read the Bible day and night. But thou read'st black where I read white.' That's very much the dynamic we have with these two characters. Both characters are in Hell. Harry has fashioned his own and keeps going deeper. Pinhead has become a prisoner and is doing everything he can to escape. They were made for each other."

Although Barker has described *The Scarlet Gospels* as his final word on the Cenobites, the author tells us we may yet see more of his long-suffering detective.

"Much in the way that I can't step outside of the characters and look at their greater imprint, I am completely unable to know when they'll turn up next. There's a lot more I'd like to do with Harry, yes, but he hasn't revealed to me exactly what that is yet."

One possible vehicle for Harry's return is a long-discussed TV show chronicling the New York PT's adventures.

"All things remain a possibility," says his creator. "The character is owned by MGM, who we have had a number of discussions with about the idea of bringing him back in a televised form. It seems that the timing is right. Horror is more prevalent than ever, so as long as that trend continues, I think we'll keep moving closer to that day."

As for Pinhead's screen future, Barker's *Hellraiser* remake remains in the works. Will his work on *The Scarlet Gospels* expanded mythology find its way into the new film?

"This, too," he says with a smile, "is a possibility. Though I'm afraid that's all I can say on that subject."

SFX asks Barker what he thinks will delight longtime fans about the new *Hellraiser*.

"Its adherence to the original vision. It's new, and it's spectacular, and most importantly it isn't done to death."

As to whether *The Scarlet Gospels* could one day inspire a film, Barker adds, "I think it's too soon to say, but as I say, all things remain a possibility. I certainly have no objections to seeing this vision on the big screen."

In the meantime, the renaissance man remains busy writing and filmmaking. "Having just wrapped the six-year long journey of finishing the director's cut of my film *Nightbreed*," he tells us, "I'm happy to be back

at my desk completing *Abarat IV: The Price Of Dreams*.

The biggest thing to discuss, which will likely be announced by the time this is printed, is our work on a film called *The Entwined*. The story spoke to me and Mark Alan Miller, who spearheaded the movement to bring *Nightbreed* to a close. We found ourselves having conversations about the story and ended up revising the script ourselves. What we ended up with is something that's quite a bit of fun. The film will begin shooting in Georgia in a few months."

Barker also remains a prolific artist, painting pieces daily for the next two volumes in his *Books Of Abarat* series. Of all his works, he remains especially proud of the Young Adult fantasy saga.

"Every day I'm either writing chapters for the books or painting the images that will go with them. It's been the great undertaking of my life and it's still too soon to share anything except the title for book IV, which I mentioned: *The Price Of Dreams*."

Just as Barker's career reflects his own belief in the value of imagination, he adds, "I think the title alone speaks volumes about the contents of the book." **SFX**

*The Scarlet Gospels* is published on 21 May.



# Tom Hardy

Meet the new incarnation of Mad Max. He's not just mad, he's furious...

WORDS BY JOSEPH MCCABE PORTRAIT BY GREG WILLIAMS

It's easy to take Tom Hardy for granted. So effortlessly does he dissolve into the characters he plays that you might fail to note the high level of craft he brings to his roles. When *SFX* meets him in Calgary, however, (where he's working on director Alejandro González Iñárritu's nineteenth-century revenge epic *The Revenant*) his talent immediately becomes clear. At only five foot, nine inches, the lean Hardy hardly appears capable of hoisting up Christian Bale's Batman and breaking him over his knee as his Bane did in *The Dark Knight Rises*. Nor does he resemble the imposing figures he cut in *Star Trek: Nemesis*, *Layer Cake*, *Bronson* and, in his mainstream breakthrough role, Christopher Nolan's *Inception*. Yet as Hardy describes becoming Max Rockatansky in the most gruelling shoot of his life – George Miller's long-awaited fourth *Mad Max* film, the aptly named *Fury Road* – he's convinced us he can become damn near anyone the job requires...

## BIODATA

► **OCCUPATION:** Actor  
► **BORN:** 15 September 1977  
► **FROM:** Hammersmith, London  
► **GREATEST HITS:** *Band Of Brothers*, *Black Hawk Down*, *Star Trek: Nemesis*, *Layer Cake*, *Marie Antoinette*, *Bronson*, *Inception*, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, *The Dark Knight Rises*  
► **RANDOM FACT:** When Hardy was a teenager, he was given a dog named Mad Max. Sadly, he passed away the year Hardy made *Fury Road*.

### Five years passed from the time you were cast to the release of *Mad Max: Fury Road*. How did you find the will to do it?

► You don't miss out on opportunities like this if you get invited. I mean, you go. Anyone who's on that journey will never forget it. When the phone call comes in, you go. It's an awesome opportunity. It doesn't matter when it comes, unless you're too old, obviously, to go on that journey.

### How physically demanding were *Fury Road*'s action scenes?

► It's not like Hong Kong karate and, you know, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. This is heavy metal in the baking sun, blunt traumas and car crashes, cars rolling over, spikes.... Everything's metal. You're

on wires with very little clothing on, and you've got a harness. It's very sweaty and hot and you're getting wrenched in the air and trying to bounce, smashed against metal, day in/day out, for six months. I got battered. I mean, it was bad.

**"If you hit your nuts when you hit the back of that lorry, play it"**

### How were you injured?

► My harness slung out really slowly from the back of a lorry and my whole body and my legs came up and I crushed my nose on this wire. It caused a lot of damage to my face. And I cried [laughs]. But I could be in much worse places. This is four years ago. I've done a lot more films since then. My shoulders are a bit wider than I thought they were. And my [stunt double] Jacob Tomuri did all the dangerous work. I learned a lot about what can happen to a human being when he hits a car from watching Jacob's body and torso fly across the desert.

### We've heard most of the action was done in camera...

► Everything that you see, happened. Give or take a few dummies that flew around. It was not [computer] generated. And the stunt performers don't really get awarded anything at the Oscars.

### Was the shoot safe for the stunt performers?

► It's not. The bottom-line is it's not really that safe. It's as safe as you could possibly get it. But there is very real harm that can happen to them. If they don't take care, they will lose legs and they will, you know, have traumas. They will break things. But that's what these guys do. Good for them. Everything you see in the film is a testament to their courage, and them wanting to do movies. Full credit to them, because without them we couldn't do the movie.

### What are your thoughts on the film now you've seen *Fury Road*?

► As a visual escapade, it's right up there with all of the superhero movies. But it's a complete variation from the superhero movies' world. It's a classic. It's just phenomenal. You've got to see it.

### How did you approach playing Max?

► Everything hurts him. So if you hit your nuts when you hit the back of that lorry, play it [laughs]. That's what Harrison Ford would have done. That's what Mel [Gibson] would have done. That's what the old school would have done. They'd have played it straight. This is tough. So make it look tough. Hurt your finger? That's manly, mate [laughs]. Get up and just hold your fingers and keep going, cos you can't stop. As I studied more about Max, I thought, "He's not going to give up on life, for stubbornness alone."

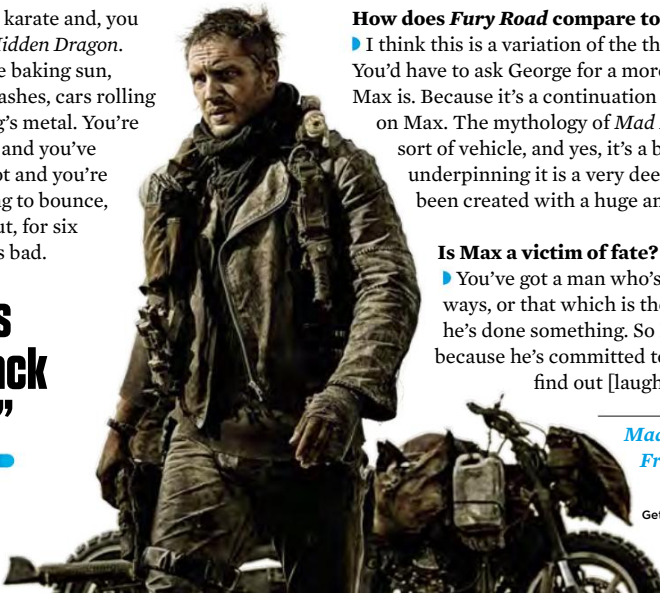
### How does *Fury Road* compare to the other *Mad Max* films?

► I think this is a variation of the three films, with further meditation. You'd have to ask George for a more succinct answer to who this Max is. Because it's a continuation of the world. But it's a meditation on Max. The mythology of *Mad Max* makes this an excellent sort of vehicle, and yes, it's a big franchise movie. But what's underpinning it is a very deep mythology and a world that's been created with a huge amount of due diligence and care.

### Is Max a victim of fate?

► You've got a man who's fighting with the gods in many ways, or that which is the afterlife. Not leaving until he's done something. So I don't think he can be a victim, because he's committed to something. As to what, you'll find out [laughs]. **SFX**

*Mad Max: Fury Road* opens on Friday 15 May.









JONATHAN STRANGE & MR NORRELL

# Stranger

*Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*, Susanna Clarke's Hugo-winning fantasy, comes to TV. Ian Berriman beholds magic





# Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell

“ONE IS NEVER ALONE when one has a book,” actor Eddie Marsan declares. It’s a sentiment which anyone who’s read Susanna Clarke’s engrossing 2004 novel *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* – now coming to BBC One as a seven-part serial – might very well agree with. Indeed, if a book *can* adequately stand in for human company, then Clarke’s brick-thick fantasy – set in an alternate 19th century Britain where, after falling out of use for centuries, magic is making a return – can substitute for an entire social circle.

On this chilly December day in South Yorkshire, it’s a statement the bewigged Marsan is expressing in character as the titular Mr Norrell, one of the mismatched magicians whose difficult relationship is at the heart of the story. In the scene being filmed today, the fussy, methodical Norrell – who has yet to meet his future apprentice,

the more instinctive, romantic Jonathan Strange (Bertie Carvel) – has been embraced by London high society, invited to dine at the home of cabinet minister Sir Walter Pole. Footmen are lined up behind the dozen dinner guests, gathered round a table laden with bowls of nuts and – the luxury! – pineapples. Paintings of naval vessels hanging on the walls serve as a reminder that, hundreds of miles away, war with Napoleon is raging.

Seated at the end of the table, Alice Englert’s Lady Pole is, slightly surreally, in casual 21st century clobber, presumably not required to actually appear in shot. Blocking the scene with the actors, director Toby Haynes – the man who locked the Eleventh Doctor in the Pandorica – ponders how best to convey a servant’s sudden panic at glimpsing something unnerving reflected in a shiny silver serving dish (Marc Warren’s sinister “gentleman with thistle-down

hair”, the king of faerie land, is not present today...) Perhaps he should drop the soup slap-bang in Norrell’s lap? Eddie Marsan doesn’t flinch...

The shooting schedule matches the scale of Clarke’s thousand-page novel, with its dense barnacle-growths of scholarly footnotes. Filming will later move on to Montreal (standing in for the Iberian Peninsula, front line in the war with France) and Trogir in Croatia (doubling for Venice, as it did in *Doctor Who*’s “The Vampires Of Venice”), but today we’re at Wentworth House, near Rotherham, an 18th century country house of titanic proportions: over 300 rooms; 250,000 square feet of floor-space; three times the size of Buckingham Palace. Some of the existing rooms are being modified and dressed, with, for example, the wood-panelled chapel serving as the original debating chamber of the House of Commons, and the ballroom transformed ➔



## JONATHAN STRANGE

Bertie Carvel



### How does the script compare to the book?

► It's absolutely brilliant, what the writer's done, because it's a fucking epic novel! I read it 10 years ago and loved it, and wanted to be in it, and never thought I would. I read the script fully expecting that what would have happened was a kind of boiling away: an oversimplification, and putting it into a television box. What the writer has done is to absolutely preserve the scale and majesty of the story. He's really not left anything out. The team and the BBC have trusted, amazingly, that an incredibly rich, complex, epic plot can be done in this format.

### Is this fantasy for a mature audience?

► It's about magic and magicians and it is a fantasy, but really it's about people; and they're very sharply drawn people. The characters have real arcs. They're real people. It's a fully imagined world in which magic exists, but it's one that's still recognisable, with human beings in it. One believes in their motivations, and that's really what the drama's about. Some extraordinary things happen, but the way people deal with those extraordinary situations is something you can believe in. It's grown-up drama. It's serious about taking itself seriously!

into one in the faerie realm of Lost-Hope by the addition of a giant tree... Other times, they're constructing sets *within* the palatial spaces – Jonathan Strange's house has been built inside the stable block. We walk through a door and an ornate chamber which once played host to a visiting George III is serving as costume and make-up; bewigged footmen and ladies in expensive gowns stand about having adjustments made. Past and present, aristocracy and artistry have crashed together, and the effect is appropriately magical.

### SMALL SCREEN

One of Toby Haynes's fellow *Doctor Who* alumni, writer Peter Harness ("Kill The Moon") is the man charged with the daunting task of adapting the novel for the screen. It might have been tougher, mind: he could have been onboard when New Line Pictures were developing a film version (their enthusiasm cooled after *The Golden Compass* failed to set the box office alight...).

"I can't imagine how you would do it as a movie," says Harness. "It wouldn't be the same story; it would be elements of this story. I think seven hours is the right length for it."

Though Harness's starting point was to edit down chunks of the novel and "kind of bash it around", sculpting the story from there wasn't as simple as simply chiselling chunks off. He also had to flesh things out.

"In the book, characters are just left for a while," Harness explains. "Well, you can't just say, 'That happened, and then we'll pick them up in episode five or six.' You've got to keep touching base with them. So there's been a fair bit of invention in the evolving of the characters. That's been the hardest – building up some characters and sculpting where they're going."

Making additions to a work that's so highly-regarded must be a pretty nerve-wrecking business...

"It has to be a very specific jigsaw piece that you're putting in, and it needs to do a number of things. It needs to match the imagination of the original. That is a bit

scary. I don't always get it right first go, but it gradually evolves... You know what you need, and roughly what shape it has to be. Eventually, it becomes the right shape."

Harness has strived to preserve the distinctive narrative voice of Susanna Clarke's novel, with its dry wit and archaic phrasings, reminiscent of the likes of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens: "A lot of her dialogue is in the finished script." As producer Nick Hirschhorn points out, one of the benefits of that voice is that it helps to foster a sense of realism.

"By using Austen-esque language, what she's doing is saying, 'This is truly authentic.' You feel like you're reading that type of novel. Then when [Marc Warren's] gentleman pops up, you go, 'Where the hell did that come from?' Therefore, it really works. I think whenever you're dealing with fantasy, you've got to create a reality that is absolutely believable."

That's a credo they've also followed when it comes to the production design.

"I'm really into magical reality," Hirschhorn explains. "I made a film beforehand called *Skellig*, with Sky. That was very gritty, very down-to-earth; then the magic really pops. I felt the same philosophy should be applied to this. [Production designer] David Roger's way of dealing with period is incredibly authentic, but has such depth and richness that it also lends itself to a fantastical environment as well. We were very purist about what the time



"So how exactly am I supposed to speak these footnotes?"



*"It really works. I think whenever you're dealing with fantasy, you've got to create a reality that is absolutely believable"*

is: what type of furniture we're using, what type of wig. It's got to be absolutely spot on. We've paid a lot of attention to detail."

And when it comes to the depiction of magic, they've been careful not to do anything which might undermine all of that hard work. The book features plenty of wondrous events: the statues in York Minster coming to life (filmed in the actual cathedral); a forest growing in the canals of Venice; an "Eternal Night" which follows a cursed man about... But the producers were keen to avoid "showing off" with effects setpieces that might distract from their primary purpose.

"We can expect to see some pretty large, spectacular moments," Nick Hirschhorn says, "but we're dealing with them in a very un-*Harry Potter*-esque kind of way. That's all about 'the effect', and it does overwhelm the story a lot of the time. This is focused always on the human drama."

So, for example: episode two opens with a significant moment from the novel, where Norrell gets his foot in the door with the Establishment by using his magic to aid the

war effort, creating illusory "rain ships" to flummox the French fleet.

"It's very stormy, it's very shades of grey. You can't really see it perfectly," Hirschhorn explains. "It's brilliant, because it informs you immediately, the way that we've played it, that Norrell has achieved what he set out to achieve in episode one, which is to ingratiate himself with Parliament, and to help with the war – which he was told he couldn't do. Immediately you open up on something like that and you know where your main character is because of that effects sequence. All of those sequences are feeding huge character developments."

So: Clarke's much-loved narrative has been given room to breathe – and a budget befitting its breadth. Changes necessary for it to work in another medium have been made, but the spirit of the novel has been preserved. And the effects are not shouting "Look at me!" but working in the service of characterisation. It sounds like all the possible pitfalls have been skilfully swerved. Proof of the pudding, of course, will come when the series finally airs. How will the book's legions of fans react? Perhaps the

author's own response can provide us with a clue...

"She's been incredibly supportive and positive and lovely," executive producer Nick Marston assures us. "She really wants to know that the adapter is absolutely inhabiting the book. And the second thing she wants is that it should work on its own terms within its own medium. When we first showed her the scripts it was an enormous moment – my heart was in my mouth..."

"... And she didn't throw it across the room," smiles Peter Harness. **SFX**

*Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell begins on BBC One in May.*

**We're pretty sure you shouldn't have an open flame near that much hairspray.**



**"Can you check my tonsils for me? How about if I open my mouth like this?"**

## & MR NORRELL

*Eddie Marsan.*



**Can only television do justice to a book like this?**

► You can't tell this story in two hours. I can understand why New Line tried to do it [as a film] and couldn't. My wife was a make-up artist on *The Golden Compass*, and I'd have loved to have seen that done like this. TV's changed in the last five years. TV now has courage and balls, it can create massive stories. We're talking about complex characters and ambition, because we've all been sitting watching box sets. The character of Norrell is similar to Walter White in *Breaking Bad* because it's a man who's trying to put it all back in the bottle. He's trying to control the world through being an analytical chemist, and Norrell's an analytical magician.

**What do you think is the main theme?**

► It's about human creativity and the subconscious and how people deal with it. Norrell is very anal and cerebral, and Strange is very visceral. The analogy we use is it's like the two characters in *Amadeus* [Salieri and Mozart]. One has to strain like crazy to find a drop of knowledge, and one can just wake up one morning and can do it. And it's about loneliness; it's about belonging. Norrell is a powerful man, but he has no intimacy with anyone. He's a very, very lonely man who tries to control the world.



# 20 YEARS OF INCREDIBLE STORYTELLING

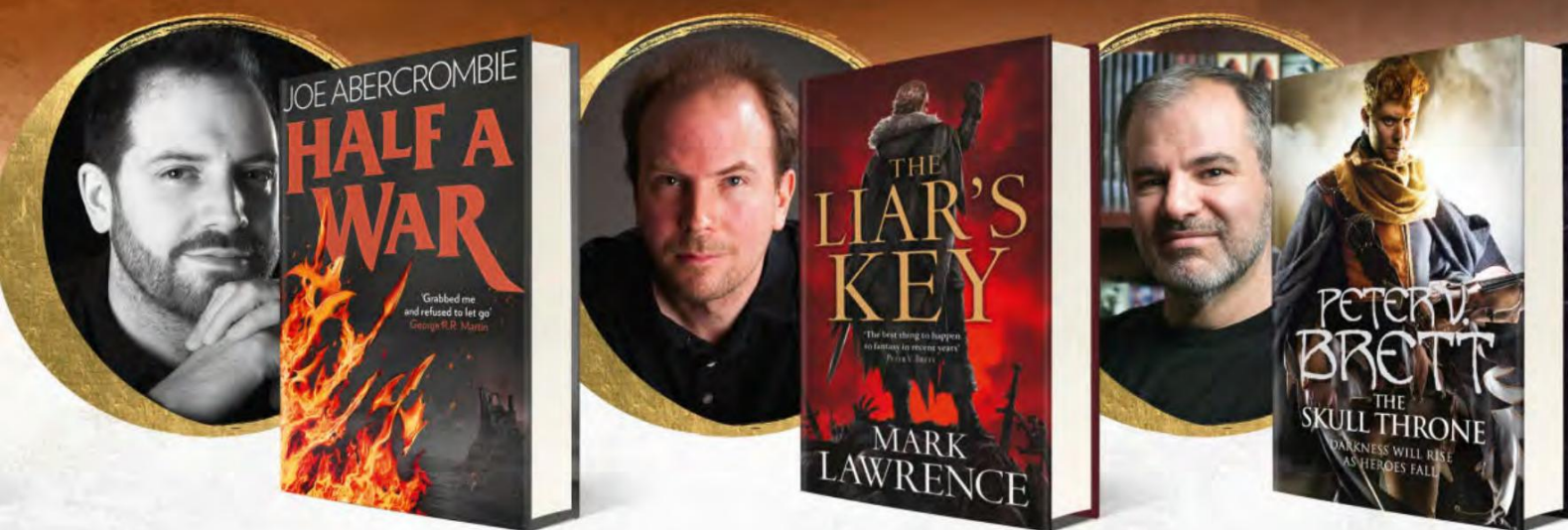


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# BATTLE

Brace yourselves  
for a whole new  
Marvel Universe...  
Stephen Jewell gets  
the details on the  
biggest crossover  
event yet





**M**ERGING THE MAIN

Marvel universe with its Ultimate equivalent and other realities, *Secret Wars* has to be Marvel Comics' most ambitious summer event to date. An eight-issue miniseries that's accompanied by an unprecedented number of spin-offs and tie-ins, it'd be easy to presume it was driven by some ruthless company agenda. But it's actually the brainchild of writer Jonathan Hickman, who, after scripting 2013 cosmic crossover *Infinity*, is taking on an even more formidable, far-reaching challenge.

"It was all Jonathan's idea," says Marvel Executive Editor Tom Brevoort. "He's had this story in the back of his head for a very long time."

The South Carolina-based comics scribe has been working towards this crucial turning point since making his Marvel debut in 2009, co-scripting *Secret Warriors* with Brian Michael Bendis. Also known for his creator-owned Image series such as *The Manhattan Projects* and *East Of West*, he cemented his place as one of Marvel's most esoteric writers during an impressive three-year stint on *Fantastic Four*. Having enjoyed shorter spells on *Ultimates* and *Ultimate Thor* and explored Marvel's occult past in *SHIELD*, he assumed the reins of *Avengers* and *New Avengers* in 2012.

"Even before he was fully on *Fantastic Four*, Jonathan pitched me an idea for a

# STATIONS

*Secret Wars* series he wanted to do," says Brevoort. "Then when the *Avengers* titles became available, he realised that he could retool those ideas to make them spin off his run on those books. And there are certainly things he did in *Fantastic Four*, *SHIELD*, *Secret Warriors* and even *Ultimates* that will come into play here."

Hickman is reuniting with *Ultimates* artist Esad Ribic, who brings a meticulous, photo-realistic style to *Secret Wars*. "This is by no means an easy project to tackle but Esad is simply crushing it!" declares Brevoort. "He's a fully fledged artist, so he's got a painter's command of colour and composition, and an imaginative flair for the dramatic. He can draw just about everyone and make them look good."

Coming 31 years after the publication of the first *Secret Wars*, this new instalment sees the return of that story's Big Bad, the Beyonder – or more intriguingly a whole race of Beyonders – but this modern-day



## "We take inspiration from the original but it goes in its own direction"

incarnation will tread its own distinct path. "What we're doing isn't a sequel or a remake, rather it's a story that draws on some specific inspiration from the original *Secret Wars*, but which goes entirely in its own direction," says Brevoort. "So while you will see some familiar faces and environments from that earlier series, they'll all be in a new context and telling a new story."

Most significantly, the Earth itself will be converted into the new Battleworld, divided into different districts that hark back to previous crossovers and other landmark plotlines, such as the *Planet Hulk*-inspired Greenland and *Old Man Logan*-homaging Wastelands. "That was also part of Jonathan's concept, the way that Battleworld would be organised to allow us to revisit all of the most classic events and storylines in Marvel history, and to play with them in a different way," says Brevoort, who has had a hand in how the different areas have been broken down. "The overall superstructure of Battleworld was again Jonathan's, and at one of our editorial retreats, he drew up a crude map to illustrate how it would all work. That map became the template for the more polished Battleworld map that we've been showing all over the place. I oversaw the final placement of the Domains on the globe once we had a list of the various tie-in projects and knew what the needs of their creative teams were."

### TREBLE ACTION

The ancillary titles will be divided up into three separate divisions in the form of the *Battleworld*, *Last Days* and *Warzone* lines. "The difference between the sub-brands isn't one of tone so much as of subject matter," explains Brevoort. "As the name implies, the *Last Days* books will tell the stories of what particular characters do with their remaining hours when faced with the end of the world. But *Punisher* is going to have a different tone to *Loki*, *Agent Of Asgard*. The *Battleworld* books deal with matters relating to the larger architecture of Battleworld, spanning multiple Domains, while the *Warzone* books largely confine their activities to a single Domain, or perhaps an adjoining pair of Domains. So the categories are really designed as a way of indicating what sort of story will be told within that particular title, so that readers can

make an informed choice about what books they're picking up."

Most significantly, *Secret Wars* will bring about the demise of the Ultimate Universe, which has been home to some outstanding comics since launching in the '00s with Mark Millar and Bryan Hitch's revolutionary partnership on *Ultimates* providing the template for the Marvel movies. Brian Bendis and Mark Bagley's record-breaking 111-issue run on *Ultimate Spider-Man* subsequently gave rise to black Hispanic Spidey Miles Morales, and the pair will now re-team on the *Ultimate End* miniseries. Originally designed as an entry point for new readers, some believe the Ultimate Universe has recently become bogged down in its own convoluted continuity, although Brevoort begs to differ. "Certainly the main Marvel Universe is still able to thrive while having a lot more continuity and backstory than the Ultimate line does," he argues. "What I do think has happened over the years is that a lot of the innovations that the Ultimate line pioneered have migrated into the main Marvel Universe line, to the point where there isn't all that much of a difference between a Marvel Universe book and an Ultimate book. And as much as we're blowing up the Ultimate Universe, we're also doing the exact same thing to the Marvel Universe, so we'll end up taking the best from all of our assorted universes and depictions to craft the new Marvel Universe."

With *Secret Wars* ushering in a much-changed Marvel Universe, comparisons have inevitably been made with DC's own zero-hour event *The New 52*, along with seminal 1985 series *Crisis On Infinite Earths*, which drastically reduced its myriad multiverses to a single milieu.

Brevoort warns not to jump to any hasty conclusions. "People have been making a lot of assumptions about just what is happening in *Secret Wars* and thereafter, some based on speculation, some based on fear or paranoia, and some based on us egging them on to think about things in certain way," he says. "But at this point, nobody really knows where all the chips are going to fall in *Secret Wars* or beyond, so it's kind of premature to have this conversation right now."

And while you might wonder how next year's summer blockbuster series will top *Secret Wars*, Brevoort points out that it is not always about scale. "Sure, it would be

Universes are colliding, and it's gonna be moider!



Even Iron Man's going to pieces in the new Wars.



difficult to do an event that's larger in scope," he says. "That's why we followed up *Infinity* with *Original Sin*, which was a more intimate, character-focused event. I cannot tell you yet what the next big thing we do is going to be, but I can say that it will try to tell a story that's very different to *Secret Wars*. There's not a lot to gain in trying to do the same sort of story again and again. It might seem on the surface that all event books are very much alike, but each story is different – and there's still an infinite number of stories that can be told about these characters!" **SFX**

*Secret Wars* launches in May.



Spotted any of your favourites yet?

What's that they say about superheroes – No One Ever Really Dies...?

## SPINNING YARNS

*Secret Wars'* tie-in will leave you in knots

From Marguerite Bennett and G Willow Wilson's all-female *Avengers A-Force* to Noelle Stevenson's *Runaways*, *Secret Wars'* numerous offshoot projects should be just as much essential reading as the main event itself. With many pivotal past extravaganzas being revisited, other highlights include Charles Soule and Leinil Yu's all-new *Civil War*, Brian Bendis's Mark Millar-riffing *Old Man Logan* and the return of Peter Parker's wife, Mary Jane, and daughter in *Spider-Man: Renew Your Vows*. On a more offbeat note, Brevoort describes Jason Aaron and Mike Del Mundo's fantastical *Weirdworld* as "a wild mash-up of all kinds of genres and with a protagonist and an environment that will be very important to the Marvel Universe going forward".



# THE CONDITION OF NEW DEATH

## BY CHINA MIÉVILLE

**T**HE FIRST REPORTED CASE OF NEW DEATH occurred on August 23, 2017, in Georgetown, Guyana. At approximately 2:45pm, Jake Morris, a fifty-three-year-old librarian, entered his living room and found his wife, pharmacist Marie-Therese Morris, fifty-one, motionless and supine on the floor. “I opened the door onto the soles of her feet,” he has said.

Mr Morris testifies that he checked his wife's pulse and found her cold. His claim to have *gone to her side* to do so has been the source of much controversy in neothanatology, this action of course being impossible in the case of the New Dead. Mainstream opinion is that this is the inaccurate memory of a distraught man. A substantial minority insist that there are no grounds to assume such error, and that Ms Morris must therefore be assumed to have been Old Dead at this point, and that her status changed seconds after discovery.

Mr Morris went to the telephone in the north-eastern corner of the room and summoned an ambulance. When he turned back to his wife's body, New Death had unmistakably taken hold.

“I turn around,” he has said, “and her feet are right in front of me again. Pointing directly at me. Again.”

During his call, Ms Morris's corpse appeared to have silently rotated on a horizontal axis approximately 160 degrees, around a point somewhere close to her waist.

With great alarm, Mr Morris began to walk around the body, but he stopped when, in his words, “those feet wouldn't stop pointing at me”. Ms Morris's body appeared to him to be swivelling like a needle on a compass, her feet always facing him.

He remained frozen, his wife's feet a few inches from his own shoes. He was unwilling to move and thereby provoke that smooth and perfectly silent motion. That was how the paramedics found him, by his dead wife.

At one point in the highly confused moments that followed, a medic demanded that Mr Morris be careful not to tread on his wife's hair. Which was, however, from Mr Morris's perspective, on the other side of her body from him.

Thus the specificity of New Death began to emerge.

After the Morris case was that of the Bucharest aneurysm, then the Toronto crosswalk, then the Hong Kong twins. New Death spread at accelerating rates. News coverage, which had started as sporadic, amused and sceptical, grew rapidly more serious. Two weeks after Ms Morris New Died, the sinking of the overloaded ferry *Carnivale* sailing between the Eritrean coast and the Italian port of Lampedusa gave the world its first harrowing scene of *mass* New Death.

Now, with the last verified Old Death having occurred six years ago, and the upgrading of all human death seemingly complete, we are inured

enough to the scenes of countless New Dead left by drone strike, terrorist attack, landslide and pandemic that it can be hard to recall the shock occasioned by that first spectacle.

The shots of almost a hundred drowned migrants, dead despite their life-belts, their bodies oddly stiff, their legs not slanting, their feet not sinking but visible at the surface of the water, are still iconic. It might be thought that, occurring on water, the apparent rotations of the New Dead would not appear quite so unnatural (old-natural, to use the now-preferred term) as the same phenomenon on land. This, however, was not the case.

The quickly leaked footage showed the instant and exact swivels by which every drowned migrant's feet always precisely faced every camera. These remained in perfect synchrony. All feet always faced all cameras no matter what abrupt and contingent motions the boats or helicopters made, or where they were when they made them. These movements were obviously not the results of currents, winds or hidden engines.

The feeds from the headcams of rescue divers were even more shocking. In it, the drowned dead without flotation devices all sink slowly, and every one of the bodies, at every level, is stiffly oriented perfectly horizontally, with its feet pointing towards every rising, panicking diver. This of course is the case even in the footage shot simultaneously from quite different directions, in which the same corpses can be identified.

In the weeks that followed, more and more scenes of the smooth, precisely flat and silent rotation of dead were released, the bodies horizontal on slopes of varying inclines, in a Baghdad plaza or on a Mexican hillside or the site of a Danish school shooting. It was, however, the *Carnivale* disaster that inaugurated the era of New Death.

There is of course variation among New cadavers. Arms and legs may be splayed to various degrees, though the range is attenuated relative to that possible in Old Death. The bodies of victims of dismemberment or explosive force do not reconstitute, though their components, even if scattered, lie according to the condition of New Death – they are, in other words, New Dead in pieces.

Stated most simply, New Death is the condition whereby human corpses now lie always on a horizontal vector – no matter the angle of the surface or the substance of the matter below them – and now orient so that their feet are facing all observers, all the time.

Two facts about this epochal thanatological shift were quickly established:

EXCLUSIVE  
CHINA MIÉVILLE  
SHORT STORY!



# “WE HAVE ENTERED A NEW ERA OF NEW DEATH STUDIES”

“New Death as a Game”. In the course of her presentation she pointed out, almost in passing, that a *locus classicus* of a foot-to-viewpoint orientation of the dead was the earliest generation of First-Person Shooters.

In such games, no matter where “you” stood, your defeated enemies would lie with their feet towards you, shifting as you shifted. This would be the case until, finally, after a programmed time, their bodies winked out of play.

With this insight, we have entered a new era of New Death Studies. In the words of the most recent issue of *The Cambridge Journal of Philosophy*, “no one is yet clear on why Mukhopadhyay’s observation is important. That it is important – that it changes everything – no doubt remains”.

Understanding remains evasive, but culture is pragmatic and quick. Those for whom showing the soles of feet has been an insult adapt no less than do those who delight in insulting them. A plethora of ceremonies are emerging around the internment and veneration of New Dead. Theologies of all traditions are, mostly, smoothly accommodating them, with

new interpretations of old texts and ways. The New Dead are already completely banalised representationally in movies, television dramas and other commodities – including, of course, video games. The point is not that rotating sugar-skeletons with wind-up handles are sold by Mexican vendors: the point is that they sell in similar numbers to any other *Dios de la Muertas* items.

This insouciance is admirable. But it is also somehow inadequate. We have tweaked our various bells and smells, but we still die as we always died, and live as we did before we died.

We are not ready. What would being ready constitute? What might the endgame of New Death be?

This is not a manifesto. It is not even a prequel to such. We don’t know what to call for, to live up to the potentiality of New Death. This is a call for a manifesto to be written. An exhortation for an exhortation, a plea to have it demanded of us to live as we must and New Die well.

We must proceed according to a presumption that we might have something up to which to live, that there might be a telos to all our upgraded dead, that we might eventually *succeed* in something, that we might unlock achievements, if we die correctly. And, conversely, that if we do not, we will continue to fail.

What the stakes of that success and that failure might be, none of us yet know.

We will all learn.

*This story is taken from Three Moments Of An Explosion: Stories By China Miéville, published in hardback and ebook on 30 July.*



The author.

i) New Death is *subjective*.

All observers in the presence of New Dead, in person or via imaging technology, will perceive that body or those bodies as oriented with feet towards them. This remains the case when those observers are directly opposite each other. *Perception and observation* is constitutive of New Death.

ii) New Death is *objective*.

Physical interventions have verified that these subjective impressions are *not illusory*. The New Dead have mass. They can be interacted with. The basic positional predicates of New Death, however, cannot be overcome. As the notorious Bannif-Murchau experiment showed, multiple observers of a single New Dead, all perceiving the body’s feet to be towards them, all instructed to take hold of the cadaver at the same instant, all coming from different directions, *will all grasp the feet at the same time*. This sometimes shocking and occasionally dangerous vectoral/locational slippage would of course have been impossible in the pre-ND era. It is not just biology, but physics, that have changed.

New Death has had no impact on death rates or causes. Nor has the agential status of the dead vis-a-vis the living changed – they remain as quiet as their Old Dead precursors. New Death is a phenomenon not of dying, nor of death, but of the *quiddity of deadness*.

Philosophies of its causes, effects, and meanings (if any) are, of course, in their infancy. But they have, very recently, taken an exciting turn.

At the 2024 Mumbai Conference “The New Dead and Their Critics”, PJ Mukhopadhyay, a graduate student of digital design, gave a paper on







## HEROES &amp; INSPIRATIONS

## M NIGHT SHYAMALAN

The *Sixth Sense* and *Unbreakable* filmmaker tells Jordan Farley about the things that fuel his creative flames

**F**EW STORYTELLERS had a bigger impact on noughties cinema than M Night Shyamalan. His zeitgeist-inspiring brand of low-key, mystery-driven, high concept, twist-tastic thrillers left an indelible mark on the filmic landscape at a time when franchise filmmaking was in its infancy and original storytelling was king. In the years since Shyamalan has moved away from writing his own stories and begun adapting others', the latest of which, *Wayward Pines*, also marks Shyamalan's first foray onto the small screen. When *SFX* catches up with Shyamalan amid promotional duties for *Pines* the sharp-suited, shaggy-haired filmmaker's eyes light up at the opportunity to talk about the people that inspired his career: "These are all heroes of mine, there's no way around it. Their names and what they achieved was huge..."

## STAR WARS

It made me want to pick up a camera. You know people see Jesus in a pancake? *Star Wars* was my Jesus in a pancake moment, it was religion. I've met Mr Lucas and been able to share this with him. I remember I was in the car on the way back from the cinema and I didn't want anyone to talk to me, I was in some religious fervour. I was so transported and taken away, so I started to play. When I



Greedo: even he's not sure who shot first in the Cantina.

was seven I was the characters and then that transformed into, "Let me take a thing and pretend it's moving and record it." It translated from wanting to have that feeling again to creating that feeling.

## SHE'S GOTTA HAVE IT

There were two seminal moments or periods – the Spielberg/Lucas era of watching movies from seven to 14. And then right around 14 I was in the airport dropping off my grandparents and back in those days they used to have little book stores right by the gate and there was Spike Lee's book about *She's Gotta Have It*, the making of that movie. I read it and was like, "What? He wasn't in the industry

and he made a movie? You can go to school for this?" It made it real. It was a big deal. So instantaneously I was like, "I'm going to NYU, the Tisch School of the Arts." Which is where he went. And again I know Spike now, he's such a hero.

## STEVEN SPIELBERG

Him and Michael Jordan, they're on another planet. Their level of talent – everyone else is merely mortal in comparison. He has an imagination that seems unending. It's almost like he's bored and he's challenging himself. I didn't see *Jaws* when it came out, I was too young, but *Raiders* was probably the moment where it went from an unformed fantasy to "I have to do this." Spielberg, the name, for me is almost deified at this point. The first time I met him was at his house. It was during *The Sixth Sense* time and I don't think I said anything remotely lucid to him. I had a fever and I was like, "This is the worst, I can't believe I have a high fever and I'm meeting the guy that I got into movies for." I had all his posters in my room. When I got nominated for the DGA award I gave a speech and Steven was in the room and it was about how I convinced my mom when I was 15 to call Steven Spielberg's office to pretend she was my producer, and ask him to look at one of my short movies. Steven was in the bathroom the whole time but that's how much he meant to me, I got my mom to embarrass me. ➔



Spike Lee preparing a quiet movie revolution.



Attack Of The Giant Steven Spielberg!





If nothing else, in Rod Serling *The Twilight Zone* had one dapper host.

## THE TWILIGHT ZONE

It has two things that are really interesting to it. Obviously the paradigm shifts, that's the obvious connection. The more subtle connection and more meaningful to me was it had a minimalist aesthetic that I think greatly added to its impact. I vibed with that take on the supernatural and B-genre subjects – treat it with incredible minimalism and it's hugely impactful and scary. They did it out of necessity, and maybe Rod Serling's instincts as well, but it's hugely inspirational. Talking about it now I feel like going back and watching it.

## SUPERHEROES

Comics haven't influenced me as much as you would think. I wasn't the kid that had a million comic books, but the ancillary off-shoots of comic books: the *Batman* TV series, was huge for me. *Spider-Man* as a comic book was a big deal. Richard Donner's *Superman* was a huge movie. The idea of comics really caught me, but I'm more into them now than I was back then.

## AGATHA CHRISTIE

Steven Spielberg was somebody that got me into film, but I'm not necessarily like Steven Spielberg in the way I make films and tell stories. Agatha Christie is really the more appropriate model, the teacher. I have her whole collection in my library; they're all leather-bound and I've read a lot about her. She'd be at dinner with her family and say, "I've finished a new novel." And they'd be like, "What?" She just did them. She became an international phenomenon, but really all she wanted to do was tell another story. It's so intimate and unrelenting, that's what I want my life to be. I wish it could be as simple as that – I just write the next one, and the next one, and the next one. And also the simplicity of what she did. She was much more disciplined as an author. She used a similar format for many books but she got to talk about characters and humanity in such a different way all within the context of what would seem a stifling format. She's an example of how you still have an unlimited amount of opportunities to tell character stories.

## PHILADELPHIA

If I lived in LA I would become a sycophantic, obsequious person that's just wanting everyone to love me, and just so derivative. I think my first instincts are derivative, and they burn off real quickly and then I become the opposite. I can't stand it if it smells like anything else. I can't stand it. And I think that tolerance of not having it feel like anything else may not have been nurtured if I had stayed in LA. In Philadelphia it's so not about movies, no one makes movies, it's nothing to do with movies, it's just regular life. Put aside the two CGI movies, I didn't come up with those concepts anyway, but all the ones that were my ideas they're all Philly based – they're all connected to Pennsylvania.

## ORIGINAL FILMMAKERS

I still feel shocked that we're in this time where 90% of the movies made are based on something else that has come before. There used to be a rule of thumb that the sequel would make only two thirds of what the original made because it was seen as exploitation, it was seen for what it was. There were exceptions like *The Godfather 2*, but generally if you made *Home Alone 2* it was going to lose money. The '70s for me was the best era of filmmaking – a really unique, auteur-driven era. If you think of 1999 we had *The Sixth Sense*, *The Matrix*, *Being John Malkovich*, *Magnolia*, *American Beauty*, *Blair Witch*, and I'm sure there's 10 others I'm not mentioning, from one year – all giant auteur-driven movies that were hugely successful for their studios. That's unheard of now.

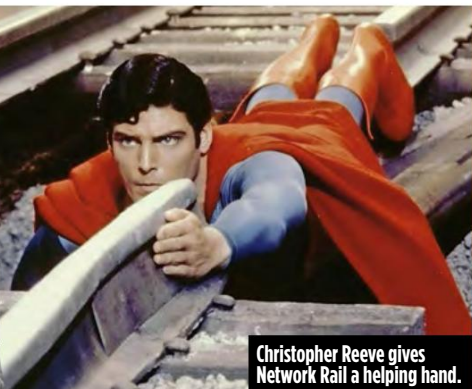
## THE SOPRANOS

The reoccurrence of grounded, beautiful, resonant, tonal experiences which I had only previously attributed to movies has now repeated itself. For me, it started with *The Sopranos*. I went, "Oh shit, that's cinema." Then it happened again for me with *Mad Men* and *Breaking Bad* and it's happened so many times that it's inspiring. I admire that and I want to be a part of that. It used to be we could only do that in film, but I think now you can do that on TV, so those were super-inspiring.

*Wayward Pines* premieres on Thursday 14 May globally on Fox.



Agatha Christie, that famous *Doctor Who* character!



Christopher Reeve gives Network Rail a helping hand.



*The Sopranos*: when TV is cinema. Kinda.



Executive Producer **M. Night Shyamalan**

Matt  
**Dillon**

Juliette  
**Lewis**

Terrence  
**Howard**

Melissa  
**Leo**

Toby  
**Jones**



**FIRST ON FOX**

# Wayward Pines

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# Jenny T Colgan

Loving the alien. The Brit novelist tells us about mixing up romance and sci-fi...

WORDS BY JONATHAN WRIGHT PORTRAIT BY JOBY SESSIONS

There are those in this world who will tell you that *The Terminator* is an action-thriller about a time-travelling soldier pursued by a cyborg assassin. Rubbish, says Jenny T Colgan. It's an SF romance. "Seriously, as far as I'm concerned, *Terminator* is about a great love affair between a woman and a tortured man and a very special baby," she says. "The killer robot is really a sideline, in my opinion."

In contrast, Colgan's new SF novel, *Resistance Is Futile*, has a romance at its centre, and not a rubbish one like in *Contact*. "Connie, the heroine, is a mathematician," she explains. "She discovers the existence of alien intelligence, then accidentally falls in love with it, with devastating consequences for, basically, the entire world."

No wonder the blurb says "*Bridget Jones meets Independence*

*Day*. It's a book, says Colgan, that grew partly from her experience writing a *Doctor Who* novel as JT Colgan, *Dark Horizons* (2012). "I've been writing romantic comedies for a female audience for about 15 years, and there's lots of women in publishing," she says. "Then I started writing *Doctor Who* and suddenly that balance completely reversed, and I'd often find myself on panels as the only girl, or very, very outnumbered. It has been such a fascinating – and wonderful, by the way – experience. So, Connie is a mathematician, which is quite a masculine world too."

If this makes Colgan sound like a dilettante in the world of SF, nothing could be further from the truth. *Resistance Is Futile* is not only funny, but it's deeply rooted in a love of the genre. This seems entirely appropriate for someone who was, by her own estimation, a nerd and a bookworm when she was growing up in small-town Scotland. "Nobody ever saw me from the nose down," she remembers, "I just read constantly."

Colgan did, however, find time to watch the TV. Tom Baker, she says, was her Doctor, but her "formative *Who* memory" involved meeting Peter Davison after winning a Target Books competition at the age of 11.

"I had short hair and he thought I was a boy, and the

**"Seriously, as far as I'm concerned, *Terminator* is about a great love affair"**

TARDIS was made out of plywood, but it was still the most wonderful thing that had ever happened to me," she says. "I was completely amazed that Turlough [Mark Strickson] was so nice to me, as I was young enough to think that if you played a baddie you were a bad person. And I was so overwhelmed to meet Nyssa [Sarah Sutton] that I burst into tears. I thought – and still do think, pretty much – that she was the most beautiful person I'd ever seen in my life."

Needless to say, it was a huge thrill to be asked to write a *Who* novel, but what was it like to do? "I'm still writing *Who* stuff, and I still adore it," Colgan says. "It's just a thrill and it never goes away. You get a TARDIS! And if I get a funny line in there that really works with the character, I'm furiously proud. The other great thing in writing for the Doctor in other media is you can go nuts with the budget. I aim never to write anything that could be filmed for less than \$150 million."

Even *Who* editorial discussions are great. "You can just talk about *Doctor Who* for hours and call it a meeting," she adds. "That is very, very high on the list of stuff I like to do."

But to return to the younger Colgan, she recovered herself sufficiently to make it back to school and onwards to Edinburgh University, a prelude to moving down south. "You could live in London then without having to be a billionaire," she says. "I did absolutely everything. Sketches; cartooning; and I was the world's worst stand-up comedian – and when you recall that Lembit Öpik once tried to become a stand-up comedian, you'll get an inkling as to just how bad I was."

If Colgan was rubbish at telling jokes to a live audience, she turned out to be much better at telling funny stories in print. ("It's easier in print because you can think about it and use the delete button...") In 2000, her first novel, *Amanda's Wedding*, involving a social climber, a Scottish laird and attempts to prevent said wedding, was published. Subsequently, she's written at least one book a year, most of which have appeared on the bestsellers' lists.

Somewhere along the way, she set up a home in France, where she lives with her husband, who's a marine engineer, and three children. "Like all working mothers, I am quite ruthlessly efficient," she says. "And like all working mothers, I have help. So I take the children to school, get some exercise, then hide in a bakery and type furiously whilst a nice lady does the Hoovering. I actually have it loads easier than most people because I choose my own hours and don't have to commute so actually it's not as hectic as people think at all. I am, fundamentally and undeniably, incredibly lucky."

But for all that she also has a home in London, is it ever a battle to reconnect with her British roots for the sake of her writing? "No, I'm culturally still British," she says. "Things like Twitter are very good for keeping you connected. My kids, though, are total froggie frogs. They even walk funny, with their fancy scarves and rubbish pop music and salad-ordering." **SFX**

*Resistance Is Futile* is published on Thursday 28 May.











# TIME MACHINE

THE STORY BEHIND THE SF AND FANTASY OF YESTERYEAR

1995

# WATERWORLD

Almost everything you think you know about Kevin Costner's blockbuster is wrong, explains Luke Dormehl

## IMAGINE THE SCENARIO.

You're a starving screenwriter, living in Los Angeles. One day you come up with the idea for a script that starts out as a "low-budget *Mad Max* rip-off". Somewhere along the line it gets more ambitious and, through a couple of friends, you get it into the hands of an agent, themselves just starting out in the business. Then things go nuts. Overnight, there's a bidding war for your script. Major movie studios get involved. You go from zero to Hollywood hero. Before long, the script gets into the hands of a director-star combo, who decide to make it as the next collaboration in their successful series of movies.

That, in a nutshell, is the story of Peter Rader. "It was an extraordinary, head-spinning two weeks," he tells *SFX*. "Within the space of a fortnight I went from having the script sent out by this young agent I was introduced to by a couple of friends to having a closed movie deal. I was driving a beaten-up old Corolla and struggling to make the rent. Suddenly I had this high six-figure deal with a major studio, and an agreement that they would buy my next script, sight unseen." Just days later, Rader's dad flew over from London to Los Angeles to see his son. Rader hired a limousine to pick his dad up from the airport. "We had champagne on the way home," he says.

This is how post-apocalyptic movies often begin: with a flashback to happier times, before the world is annihilated by invading aliens, turned into a warzone by gleaming Austrian cyborgs, or drowned beneath melted Polar ice caps. The script Rader was paid \$350,000 for (plus an extra \$150k if it successfully reached screens) was *Waterworld*, a 1995 movie that has gone down in history as one of the great Hollywood disasters.

Arriving at almost exactly the same time as *SFX* #1 hit newsstands, *Waterworld* tells the story of "the Mariner", an antihero drifter played by Kevin Costner, who sails a watery Earth searching for dry land, while drinking his own purified urine.

But if you think that existence sounds miserable, you haven't heard the sorry tales of those involved with a production that ran out of control in just about every way possible.

## WATER WAY TO GO

To work out where *Waterworld* went so wrong, you've first got to examine why it appeared at the time to be so right. On paper, the film looked perfect. In the mid-1990s, few movie stars were bigger than Kevin Costner: then fresh off the release of *Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves*, *Dances With Wolves* and *The Bodyguard*, Costner was one of a select few post-'80s stars who could sell an action movie without enormous muscles →

No, this isn't a scene from the never-released sequel, *Fireworld*...



Dennis Hopper won a Razzie for his performance as the villain, the Deacon.









or an oversized gun. For *Waterworld*, he was paired once again with his *Robin Hood* director, Kevin Reynolds.

Right from the start it was clear that trouble was brewing. After Rader's script was bought, he was dragged into what seemed like an endless process of rewrites, with five, six, seven drafts all written and then discarded. Rader himself was eventually let go and a host of other writers brought in to take a crack at the screenplay. "I didn't realise a writer could be fired. That's how naive I was," Rader says. David Twohy, the screenwriter behind *The Fugitive* and *The Chronicles Of Riddick*, is the only one to share an on-screen credit with Rader in the finished movie, although there were plenty of others – including genre legend Joss Whedon.

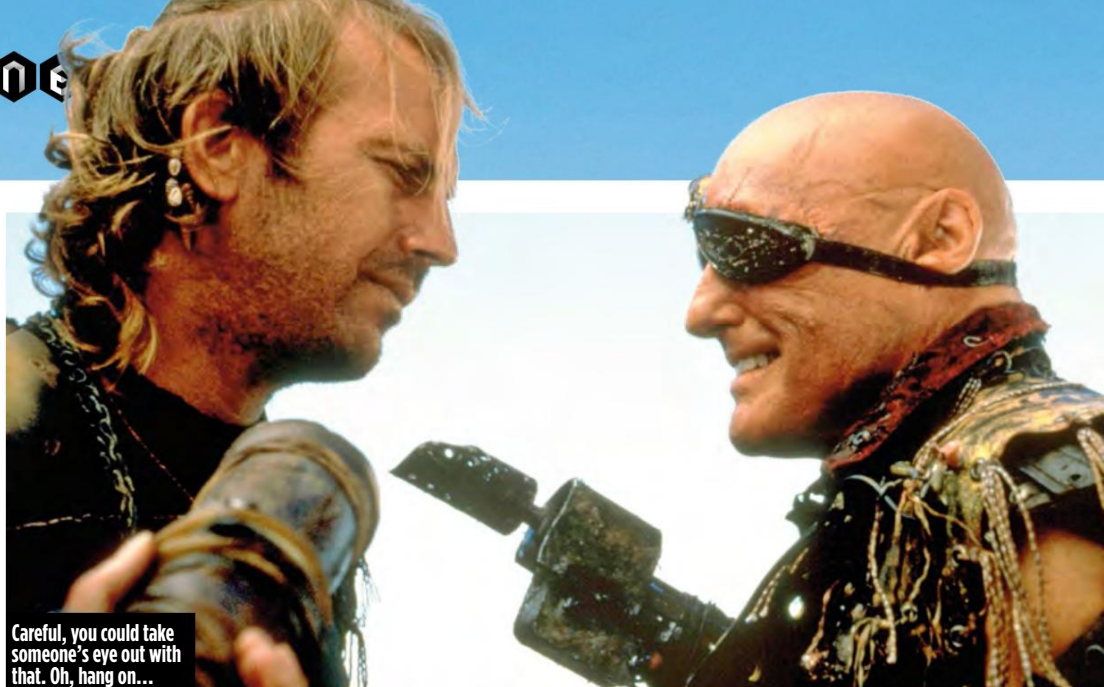
Script difficulties were just the tip of the (melted) iceberg for *Waterworld's* problems, however. Ever since the disastrous shoot for *Jaws* in the '70s, the challenges of filming at sea were well known. "[*Waterworld's* filmmakers] actually spoke to Spielberg before they began production," Rader recalls. "He told them, 'For god's sake, whatever else you do, don't shoot the whole movie on water. Do it on a soundstage.' They chose to ignore that advice."

Making big-budget Hollywood movies doesn't come with a "how to" manual, but if it did, one of the points would likely be that producers ignore Steven Spielberg at their peril. Almost appearing to tempt the cinema gods, the movie's filming location was chosen as Hawaii's Kawaihae Harbor. Too late they discovered that the name translated as "rough waters". The resulting seasickness and constantly changing weather conditions made it a massive headache for all involved. At one point during filming, an entire set sank and had to be retrieved.

Three weeks into production, Rader visited the set. "By that point they were already three weeks behind schedule," he says.

## FROM BAD TO WORSE

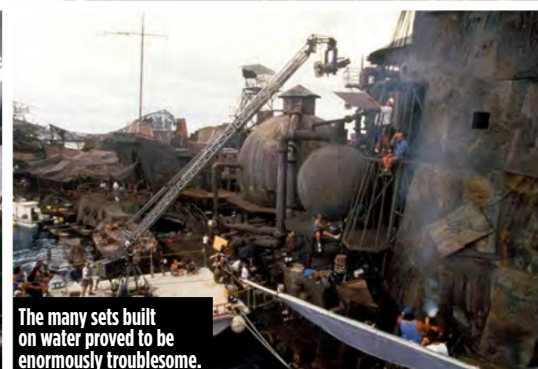
Waters were far from calm between director and star, too. Despite having worked together multiple times before – most notably on 1991's *Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves* – *Waterworld* turned out to be a headache for all involved as lead actor (and producer) Kevin Costner butted heads with director Kevin Reynolds. It wasn't the first time. "Kevin Costner and Kevin Reynolds had this crazy love-hate relationship going back to film school days," says Rader. "Costner would bring Reynolds into a project to direct him, then kick him out of the editing room. After *Robin Hood* they weren't talking to each other. But, of course, as soon as Kevin Costner got



Careful, you could take someone's eye out with that. Oh, hang on...



"I DO NOT DESERVE A RAZZIE!!!"



The many sets built on water proved to be enormously troublesome.

interested in *Waterworld*, he said, 'I know the perfect guy for this.' And it was Reynolds. As I understand it, Kevin Reynolds was given a number of assurances that the same thing wouldn't happen again. And guess what? He was kicked out of the editing room one more time. I think that was the death knell in their relationship."

Costner wound up taking the brunt of the movie's bad press. Having risen to A-list status in the years before, by the time *Waterworld* set sail for cinemas the impression was that he had got too big for his fishing boots.

Costner was paid \$14 million for appearing in the movie, but the vast sums of money being hurled about didn't stop there. Everything was dissected in the press: from the cost of his accommodation (\$1,800 per night) to the \$800,000 yacht acquired specifically for ferrying him the 400 yards from dry land to movie set.

The end result of all this messiness was a waterlogged shooting schedule, which ballooned from an optimistic 96 days to a downright epic 166 days: almost half a year of non-stop filming. The budget expanded too,



The young actress who played Enola, Tina Majorino, later appeared in *True Blood*.

## FIVE GREAT ECO-FRIENDLY SCI-FI MOVIES

### Soylent Green

► Is there a single person who doesn't know the twist by now? Still eminently watchable and not a little creepy.

### WALL\*E

► Pixar robot cleans up Earth after it becomes a consumerist wasteland. Pixar cleans up by selling tie-in toys.

### Silent Running

► Plants are preserved in a giant greenhouse in space after Earth's plant life dies. Who would think a sci-fi movie about gardening would be so good?



### The Mad Max saga

► The *Mad Max* movies portray a world driven into chaos by the using up of the last of our oil reserves.

### Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home

► What do you do after seeking out strange new worlds and battling Klingons? Save the humpback whales, of course.

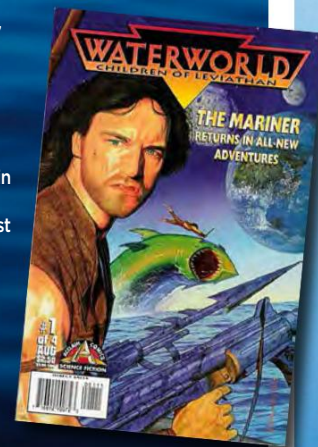




Basic Instinct's Jianne Tripplehorn co-starred as Helen.

## (WATER)WORLD BUILDING

► Few one-off movies do as good a job of world building as *Waterworld*, which establishes a Planet Earth, circa 2500, in which the polar ice caps have melted, and the sea now covers almost all of the land. Twenty years later, we're unlikely to ever get a sequel to the movie, but fans can flesh out the universe if they so wish. A tie-in novel provides a bit more detail about the world, while a four-issue 1997 comic book sequel does exist, titled *Waterworld: Children Of Leviathan*. Kevin Costner didn't permit the artist to use his likeness, which explains why the Mariner undergoes a facelift between stories.



## "SPIELBERG TOLD THEM, 'FOR GOD'S SAKE, DON'T SHOOT THE WHOLE MOVIE ON WATER'"

like the waistband of a pair of elasticated trousers at an all-you-can-eat buffet. When Costner signed on, *Waterworld* was budgeted at a not-inconsiderable \$65 million. After all was said and done, the film cost \$175 million to bring to the screen. Adjusted for inflation, it cost more than *Avatar*.

"You know what the crazy part is?" laughs Peter Rader. "When I first wrote the script, one producer turned it down flat, saying, 'You think I'm made of money? This thing will cost three million to shoot.' If only they'd known."

### THE FLOP THAT WASN'T

According to popular legend, what happened next was one of Hollywood's most infamous money-losers: a movie which barely registered a ripple of interest from audiences.

In fact, the truth is somewhat different.

*Waterworld* earned \$264 million in cinemas and went on to be a hit on video and television. An unspecified marketing budget plus the magic of movie accounting means it's difficult

to know exactly when *Waterworld* broke even, but it did. Today, it is a profitable film in Universal's back catalogue. The film's real success, however, was a theme park attraction called *Waterworld: A Live Sea War Spectacular*. In the years that followed, the show played thousands of live shows in five different parks around the world. "That was where the film did really well in terms of licensing," says Peter Rader. "I still get residual cheques for it, even 20 years on."

Perhaps even more surprising is that, all things considered, *Waterworld* is actually a pretty decent film, more than worthy of a critical reappraisal. Far from being the debacle that makes the disastrous *Batman & Robin* look like *Citizen Kane* as some believe, the movie stands up as a post-apocalyptic epic. The filmmakers chose to avoid using CGI and instead go for practical effects, which might have seemed disappointing in 1995, but is a godsend when watching the movie today and being spared the kind of graphics which look like they belong on a first gen PlayStation.

Kevin Costner makes a good lead, too, despite the critical drubbing he took at the time. His character is a gruff antihero that borrows from Costner's Robin Hood persona and adds a level of gritty stoicism. Even the once-mocked fact that he plays a mutant (something which prompted critics at the time to mockingly label the film *Fishtar*, in reference to 1987's flop *Ishtar*) seems decidedly less silly in an age of Aquaman and X-Men movies.

The real selling point of *Waterworld*, however, is the superbly over-the-top performance by Dennis Hopper, who criminally won a Razzie for his performance. Having made his comeback to the big time as the gas-huffing villain in David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*, Hopper's performance in *Waterworld* may lack subtlety, but it's a blast to watch. "Dennis Hopper is absolutely fantastic in the film," says Rader. "He just went to town with that role, sinking his teeth into it and hamming it up like crazy."

*Waterworld* may be synonymous with Hollywood gone wrong, but if anything it speaks to the strange relationship we have with ultra-expensive movies – and with the stars we raise up to the superheric level of modern gods. Turning 20 this year (and, as noted, sharing a birthday with this very magazine) it's a film we have a not-so-secret soft spot for: the Hollywood flop that really wasn't.

So give it another shot. Tell 'em *SFX* sent you. **SFX**



# PENNY DREADFUL



What's happening in the world of horror movies this month...



The kids aren't alright this month, from the shy, secretive fish-worker in excellent Scando chiller *When Animals Dream*, to the bullied kid with a serial killer for a brother in low budget

curio *Found*. Then there's two little zombie girls, Maggie and Melanie, making their way to big screens soon. Plus David Lynch gets an alarming offer...



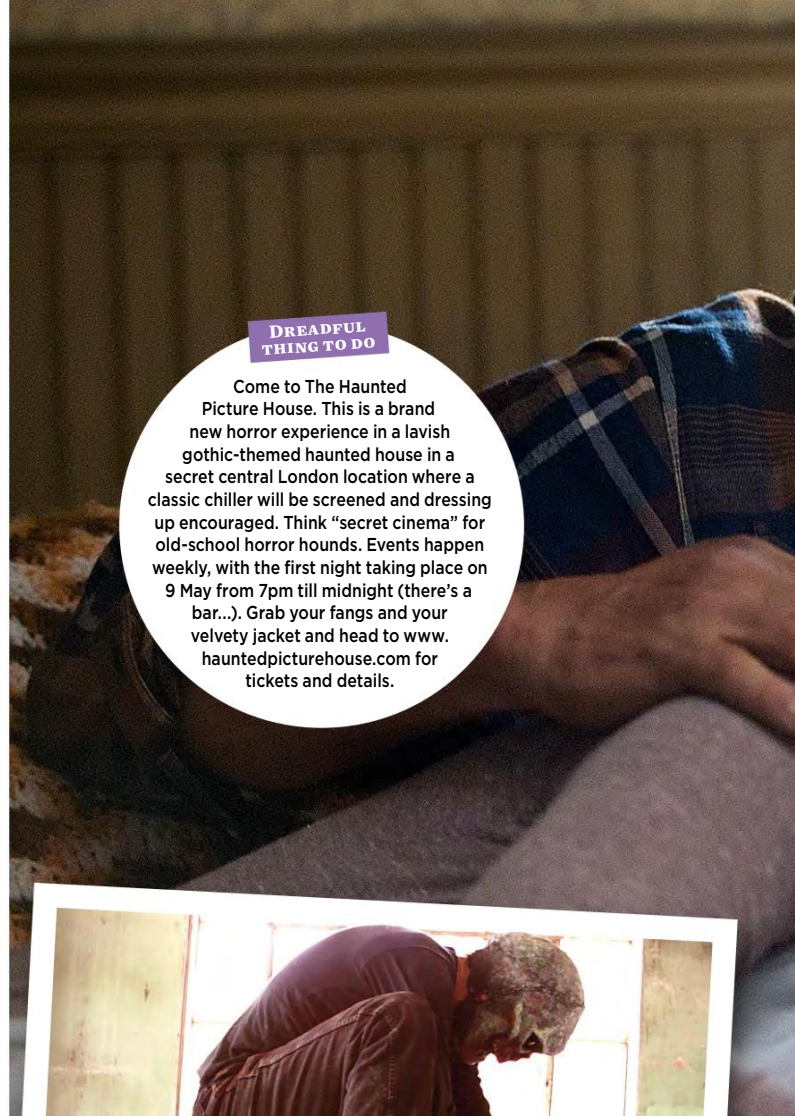
## HEAD GIRL

One of my favourite books of the last year, MR Carey's *The Girl With All The Gifts* is getting a movie adap. Hooray! It's the story of a gorgeous, loving, super-smart little girl called Melanie, who also happens to be a zombie. I must admit I've been having serious zombie-fatigue of late, but somehow *The Girl With All The Gifts* feels new – from the careful world-building, the phenomenally chilling ending, to the highly likeable characters (Gemma Arterton is set to star as Melanie's kind-hearted teacher, Glenn Close as the scientist searching for a cure, with Paddy Considine as the soldier trying to protect them). The director is Colm McCarthy, who made decent gritty monster movie *Outcast* – so

far, so promising, except one thing. They've changed the title to *She Who Brings Gifts*. Horrendous. For a start, *The Girl With All The Gifts* is alliterative and trips off the tongue, second it means something (it's related to the Pandora myth) and finally *She Who Brings Gifts* sounds like a sort of sinister Santa and not a perfect child blessed with grace, intelligence, kindness and beauty as well as something a bit more sinister besides. Still, if that's the biggest change I'll love this anyway – Carey himself developed the script concurrent with the novel so this has every chance of being a masterpiece.

## DAD OF THE DEAD

More little girl zombies in the new trailer for *Maggie*, a family drama/undead horror



## DREADFUL THING TO DO

Come to The Haunted Picture House. This is a brand new horror experience in a lavish gothic-themed haunted house in a secret central London location where a classic chiller will be screened and dressing up encouraged. Think "secret cinema" for old-school horror hounds. Events happen weekly, with the first night taking place on 9 May from 7pm till midnight (there's a bar...). Grab your fangs and your velvety jacket and head to [www.hauntedpicturehouse.com](http://www.hauntedpicturehouse.com) for tickets and details.



Looks like he's *Found* an excuse to get out of the decorating...

starring Abigail Breslin as the titular teen infected by the virus with Arnold Schwarzenegger himself as the loving father who wants to stay by her side during the change. This was developed from a blacklist screenplay (the annual list of the best unproduced scripts in Hollywood) by feature first-timer Henry Hobson and despite the heavyweight cast and the intriguing trailer I'm nervous. Originally this was going to star Paddy Considine and Chloë Grace Moretz, which sounded perfect. Then the film was going to premiere at the Toronto Film Festival, which often debuts the best new horror around, but it got pulled at the last minute by Lionsgate who'd just acquired it. And now it's getting an early May US release, right in the middle of

blockbuster season, after a first screening at Tribeca. Who is this for? Horror fans? Arnie-philies? Eighties action aficionados? Call me cynical but this could be DOA.

## CHEAP AND NASTY

It's a truth universally acknowledged among committed horror fans that we'll put up with a certain level of, let's say, "rough edges" if a film is clever/compelling/gory/funny/frightening enough. We'll swallow vaguely hammy acting. We'll call graininess "authentic grit". We'll take excessive use of ketchup on the chin. But there is a tipping point, and *Found*, an interesting, compelling but grimy chiller out now on DVD, is only just on the right side. Directed by no one you've heard





# DREADFUL A-Z OF HORROR

Penny's monthly dictionary of doom

## P IS FOR... PREGNANCY

### ROSEMARY'S BABY

Roman Polanski, 1968

► Brilliantly paranoid chiller with Mia Farrow as the brittle young mother-to-be manipulated by her husband and the residents of the apartment block she moves into. An excellent demonic horror as well as an exploration of the strange invasiveness of pregnancy.



### INSIDE

Alexandre Bustillo, Julien Maury, 2007

► Ultra-violent French shocker where a recently bereaved and heavily pregnant woman is tormented by a deranged Béatrice Dalle who wants to take her baby by any means necessary. Highly disturbing example of New French Extremism with a killer climax.



### GRACE

Paul Solet, 2009

► This creepy feature debut follows another recently bereaved expectant mother who's told her baby has been killed, but carries it to term anyway, only for the still-born child to come back to life and prove highly demanding of its mum. A metaphor for post-natal depression? An exploration of the bond between mother and child? Or just a gross-out vampire baby horror....



### ALIEN

Ridley Scott, 1979

► Much has been written of gender politics in the *Alien* movies, the penis-like xenomorph, the ship's computer called "Mother", the boobs on the bottom of the Nostromo... but no pregnancy horror list can be complete without John Hurt's oral impregnation and chest-burster "birth" scene. Nightmarish, and acted with terrifying conviction too.



A beardy Schwarzenegger cares for Maggie – will anyone care for the movie?

of, starring no one who's been in anything, it's a problematic revenge tale of a nice little kid whose parents are neglectful and cruel and whose brother is a serial killer. It's peppered with black humour, and the closing shot is a cracker, but the acting is dodgy and there's a film-within-a-film subplot which vaguely implies that watching crappy low-rent horror movies turns you into a maniac. Perhaps low production values are perversely comforting when the material is disturbing? It doesn't look real so it's not upsetting? Most of the actors are wooden so it's okay to laugh when they're murdered and abused? Or perhaps I'm a maniac in the making. If so I'm sure I'll enjoy director Scott Schirmer's next project, entitled *Hellevator Man*, which comes with the single plot line, "A guy has sex with a robot". Top class.

### GREAT DANE

► More growing pains, in *When Animals Dream*, my movie of the month, out May. This is a quiet, grim coming-of-ager inspired by *Carrie* and *Winter's Bone* about a girl in an isolated fishing community in Denmark.

This is bleak stuff – young Marie elbow-deep in fish guts during the day, bullied by her ruffian co-workers and caring for her poorly mother during the evening. And if that wasn't enough she's turning into a murderous beast. It's like a Nordic *Ginger Snaps*, which does for werewolves what *Let The Right One In* did for vampires – ie makes them sympathetic but depressing and unsexy.

### CHEEKY OFFER

► So David Lynch isn't doing *Twin Peaks* any more because, according to Lynch (via Twitter) "not enough money was offered to do the script the way I felt it needed to be done." The project may still go ahead but it's almost certainly going to get panned by fans now. Imagine my distress then to find an open letter to Lynch in my inbox (I have no idea why I'm on this mailing list, honestly!) from a producer of adult movies offering Mr Lynch a chance to do a *Peaks*-porno spin off. "We could call it *Twin Cheeks*," the writer says "or even keep the name as is, since it is already slang for boobs." Now that would be truly horrific.





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# Rated

edited by Ian Berriman

The best reviews section in the universe

★★★★★ Superb ★★★★★ Good ★★★★★ Average ★★ Poor ★ Terrible

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### A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night

Iranian-American director Ana Lily Amirpour's debut freshens up vampires.

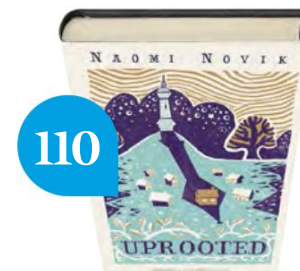
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# A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night

The Good, The Bad And The Bitey

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 22 May

15 | 101 minutes

**Director:** Ana Lily Amirpour

**Cast:** Sheila Vand, Arash Marandi, Marshall Manesh, Mozhan Marnó, Dominic Rains, Rome Shadanloo

## SOMEWHERE IN IRAN, IN

the dead of night, a vampire skateboards down the street, her chador – a variation of the hijab – billowing behind her like a superhero's cape. In the previous scene she threatened to eat the eyes out of a child's skull; a few scenes later *The Girl* is sharing an erotically charged scene with a young man dressed up as Dracula, set to "Death" by indie-rockers White Lies.

It's safe to say that not since 2008's *Let The Right One In* has there been a fresher take on the vampire genre than *A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night*; or, at the very least, that it may very well be the best black-and-white Iranian vampire spaghetti-Western noir that you'll see this year.

The feature film debut of writer and director Ana Lily Amirpour, it

**Not since 2008's *Let The Right One In* has there been a fresher take on the vampire genre**

takes place in the fictional Bad City, a town that has as much to do with its setting of Iran (and its language) as *A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night* has to do with being a girl. Instead, it's a piece of urban fantasy, with Amirpour (who was raised in America) imagining her parents' homeland as a bleak, desolate hive of sex, drugs and pulp – Frank Miller's *Sin City* on a hard, hazy hangover. (Unsurprisingly, given Iran's strict government regime, the film was shot in California.)

One of the most notable residents of Bad City is Sheila Vand's *The Girl*, a young vampire who divides her time between stalking the streets, preying (mostly) on despicable men, and sitting at home, sullenly listening to hip music on vinyl. Her age is never revealed, but rest assured: she was probably into sucking blood before it was cool. During her murderous travels, she crosses paths with the likes of drug-dealing pimp Saeed (Dominic Rains), his miserable prostitute Atti (Mozhan Marnó), a customer of his, the bereaved Hossein (Marshall Manesh) and his handsome, long-suffering son Arash (Arash Marandi), whose father's drug debts land him in a spot of bother. And it's the latter that *The Girl* strikes up an uneasy, tentative romance with.

The story itself is quiet and sparse, its narrative powered by mood more than anything else, meaning that its economic use of shocks – especially a gory one involving a sucked finger

Marjorie's barbershop offered a deeply personal service.

– hits all the harder, but also that it suffers a sluggish lack of drive in its final act, as *The Girl* and Arash's relationship concludes with more of a whimper, than a bang. Not that that taints the story overall, which is magnificently told.

It's clear that *A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night* is informed by a genuine love for film, its patchwork of influences ranging from the minimalist indie tone of Jim Jarmusch to the gothic atmosphere of *Nosferatu* and *Dracula*, and the dramatic pomp of Sergio Leone's *Dollars* trilogy. Indeed, its entire opening – from the Ennio Morricone-style twang of the music to the familiar typography of its credits – is a huge spaghetti Western homage.

And yet, while *A Girl...* is

reassuringly familiar, it is not so enamoured by its inspirations as to fail to offer something new. Amirpour's direction, for a start, is extraordinarily confident, with near-on every shot crafted with imagination, care and purpose. In particular, scenes involving *The Girl* following someone – whether she looms over a shoulder or lingers behind in profile – are as moody and menacing as they are visually iconic, with more than a few shots that wouldn't look out of place in a photography exhibition.

*The Girl* herself has a lot to do with this. Sheila Vand plays the vampire with an effectively delicate sense of detachment, coldly regarding humanity with equal measures of bewilderment and disgust, as if she's staring at an ant





farm. A wonderful example is the scene in which *The Girl* finds herself invited into the home of the creepy, if charismatic, drug dealer Saeed, a striking creation played with devilish delight by Rains. It's an encounter fraught with dark humour, as Saeed attempts to seduce her with enthusiastic dancing, only for the vampire to look silently on, with veiled contempt. The hunter and the prey – and Saeed is very much mistaken as to which one he is.

But such snarl would tire if it wasn't tempered by something deeper and human, and Vand balances the two well, with a performance that hints at a long, haunted history of pain and guilt beneath her character's cold, harsh veneer; a depth that makes sure the story's substance isn't totally overshadowed by its style.

One of the more obvious assumptions to make about *A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night* is that it's a feminist twist on the genre – an anti-*Twilight*. Its title, for one, evokes the typical idea of the woman as a victim, when the reality is quite different. For another, *The Girl*'s victims – in another role reversal – are mostly misogynist males. Although, given the script's subtle nature (and the fact that she also kills a random homeless guy), that's left open to interpretation.

What's not, however, is that the film is about feeling trapped by your circumstances – whether that means an overpowering thirst for blood or having to sell your body for money – and the loneliness that follows. And it's in that loneliness that *The Girl* and Arash strike up a bond, one

that is mostly unspoken. On paper, of course, such a lack of conversation should kill their romance stone dead, but Amirpour's direction speaks volumes. Their scenes together are few, but they matter. The erotically charged sequence mentioned earlier, for instance, is electrifying in its execution; as the two first-time lovers move toward each other with the tense, glacial pace of a horror, all perfectly pitched to its soundtrack, all so intimate you can practically feel the breath on your neck. It says more than words ever could. For that alone, Ana Lily Amirpour has become one of cinema's most exciting prospects.

**Stephen Kelly**

**?** Director Amirpour, who resembles *The Girl* and is a lifelong skateboarder, actually performed the skateboarding sequences.

## Blood Sisters

Four more vampire films by female directors



### NEAR DARK

1987

► Kathryn Bigelow's moody meld of Western and horror follows Bill Paxton's farm boy, inducted into a travelling clan of vamps. A radical take on the genre, it strips out the paraphernalia of garlic, crosses and stakes, swapping seduction for slaughter.

### BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

1992

► The *Buffy* movie wasn't a rip-roaring success, but Fran Rubel Kuzui deserves credit for pushing Joss Whedon in new directions. Before she suggested taking inspiration from John Woo, martial arts wasn't part of the concept. Sadly, she also played up the comedy elements to the point of camp.

### VAMPS

2012

► Accepting ageing is a major theme in this bittersweet horror-comedy, which reunited *Clueless* writer/director Amy Heckler with star Alicia Silverstone. Silverstone plays a 170-year-old vampire in NYC, who struggles with issues like keeping up with new technology and how to put on make-up with no mirror...



### KISS OF THE DAMNED

2013

► This sensual effort from Xan Cassavetes homages the style of '70s Euro horrors by the likes of Jess Franco. Joséphine de La Baume plays a civilised professional bloodsucker who falls for and turns *Heroes* star Milo Ventimiglia's screenwriter.



## The Cobbler

It's cobbler's

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 22 May

12A | 99 minutes

Director: Thomas McCarthy

Cast: Adam Sandler, Dan Stevens, Dustin Hoffman, Steve Buscemi, Melonie Diaz, Ellen Barkin

**THIS IS PROBABLY THE** least-awful film Adam Sandler has made in quite a while. That being said, it's still not good. It's not even in the arena of good. It's cloying and trite and ridiculous, and the whole premise is predicated on the idea that "sole" and "soul" are interchangeable concepts and not just words that sound the same.

Max Simkin (Sandler) is a cranky, world-weary fourth-generation cobbler in a quaint eastside New York neighbourhood that is being slowly gentrified, a process that is pushing out old codgers like himself and his next door neighbour, a wizened barber (Steve Buscemi). One day Max is visited by a hostile thug (Wu-Tang Clan rapper Method Man) who wants new soles for his alligator-skin shoes. Max's usual rig goes on the blink, so he's forced to use an old stitcher in the basement



"What do you mean, you forgot the Odor Eaters?"

of his shop. Turns out it's magic, and allows Max to take on the appearance of whoever the shoes he's cobbling belong to – like said thug. He uses this new-found power to save the neighbourhood and perhaps even his own battered sole... sorry, soul.

It is entirely possible that the erstwhile *Waterboy* and *Wedding Singer* star believes there is some depth to this clunky fairytale, that some universal truth about life, the universe, and everything will somehow seep out of the mallet-to-the-skull obviousness of it all. He is mistaken. But at least he manages to refrain from babytalk in this one. Nicely shot it may be, but *The Cobbler* is aggressively cornball.

**Ken McIntyre**

❓ If the director could step into someone's shoes, "It would be kinda cool to check out Putin. I want to see what that guy does..."

## Unfriended

Death from the Skype

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 1 May

15 | 83 minutes

Director: Leván Gabriadze

Cast: Heather Sossaman, Matthew Bohrer, Courtney Halverson, Moses Jacob Storm, Shelley Hennig, Will Peltz

**THE CONCEPT OF MAKING** a film set entirely within chat windows on a computer screen is not completely new: director Nacho Vigalondo used it last year for schlock thriller *Open Windows*. But *Unfriended's* Leván Gabriadze takes things a step further in exploiting the idea of social media and how The Kids Today communicate with his new horror movie, a morality tale for our time that is much more successful in ambition than it is in execution.

Spurring this story is the suicide of Laura Barns, a high school student who shot herself after someone posted a video of her drunken antics and unleashed a wave of online scorn. We're introduced to a group of friends who knew her, and are all meeting via Skype to discuss an upcoming event, flirting, joking or otherwise



Harry Styles still hadn't followed her back.

goofing off as they do so. But soon they're also dying, as a malicious, mysterious entity that appears to be Laura's various old accounts stalks them both virtually and in real life.

The concept is admirable and works to a certain level, but the characters prove almost uniformly unlikeable so there's no real compulsion to root for them to escape this ghostly techno-menace. And while using the screen is initially different and entertaining, it soon becomes flat and grating, and the lack of real action means that you quickly tire of watching juddering videos flicker. There are some scares here, but *Unfriended* ends up so annoying it's easy to disconnect. **James White**

❓ *Unfriended* was shot in very long takes – four times, the cast performed the entire film in one go.

## Home

The Boov make a move

★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

U | 94 minutes

Director: Tim Johnson

Cast: Jim Parsons, Rihanna, Steve Martin, Jennifer Lopez

**CANDY-COLOURED AND** cute as a bug, this toon about an odd-couple quest dares to boldly go where... just about everyone's already been.

When accident-prone alien Oh (Jim Parsons) teams up with Rihanna's feisty human Tip, we're not going anywhere *Lilo & Stitch* or *Shrek* haven't already taken us. Except they get there faster. Setting up the invasion by the cowardly Boov makes this sight-gag-sprinkled tale a slow starter. But once Oh has accidentally betrayed their co-ordinates to the Boov's deadly enemies, the Gorg, his fugitive mission with Tip bombs along through swooping jeopardy, including wrecking Paris with a topsy-turvy Eiffel Tower.

The comedy is gentle and age-appropriate – the Boov resemble slapstick, intergalactic Minions, so there's no scary stuff. Adults will appreciate sly digs at



In the future everyone has wide eyes, all the time.

everything from invasion tactics ("But the Boov liberate and protect!") to rampant consumerism. Nonetheless, the life lessons about misfits making good, trying against all odds and family coming first rain down like a meteor shower.

Director Tim Johnson delivers high-quality, imaginative visuals and piles on pastel cuteness. Rihanna gives Tip an engaging mix of vulnerability and moxie, holding her own against Parson's perkily eccentric Oh, who comes complete with Jar Jar Binks-style Google-translate English. Steve Martin also has sly fun as the Boov's coward-in-chief Captain Smek, a notable plus for adults who need more than 3D hijinks and child-friendly yucks to chew on. **Kate Stables**

❓ Four-minute short "Almost Home" tells the backstory to the Boov's journey to Earth. Watch it here: <http://bit.ly/shorthome>.

## The Canal

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 8 May

18 | 93 minutes

Director: Ivan Kavanagh



**THE SPECTRE OF** J-horror looms large over this Irish horror (screening mainly in the Republic) about a cuckolded husband who, after his wife's found drowned in the nearby canal, discovers their house has a bloody history.

Like *Ring*, it features supernatural entities manifesting via a visual medium and a female wraith with unnaturally jerky movements. At times the homage borders on outright theft, but these sequences certainly inspire shivers. Artistic images of pylons and swaying reeds add ominous atmosphere, and Steve Oram amuses as a coarse copper.

What sinks it are the hoary storytelling devices (conveniently-placed expository photos, for example) and its predictability – the "big twist" is about as hard to guess as a *This Morning* phone-in quiz. **Ian Berriman**

## ALSO OUT



It's a busy month for movies, but sadly the studios are keeping all the big ones under wraps. This issue went to press before the first UK screening of **AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON**, so head to <http://bit.ly/sfxreviews> for a review. Out on 8 May: romantic fantasy **THE AGE OF ADALINE**, in which a woman mysteriously stops ageing in 1933. George Miller puts the pedal to the metal once more on 15 May as **MAD MAX: FURY ROAD** roars into cinemas. Finally, 22 May brings us a trip to "a secret place where nothing is impossible" in **TOMORROWLAND: A WORLD BEYOND**, '80s horror remake **POLTERGEIST**, and Tove Jansson animation **MOOMINS ON THE RIVIERA**.



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# Birdman



The Cape Escape

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**Release Date:** 4 May

2014 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD/download

**Director:** Alejandro G Iñárritu

**Cast:** Michael Keaton, Emma Stone, Edward Norton, Andrea Riseborough, Naomi Watts, Zach Galifianakis



## THE HYSTERIA

surrounding the awards season means that director Alejandro G Iñárritu's latest is now best

known for beating *Boyhood* to the Best Picture statuette at the Oscars. That's kind of a shame, but it's striking enough to outlast such trivia. Divisive it may be, but what we have here is one of last year's most intriguing and technically impressive films – as well as one of its funniest.

Michael Keaton stars as Riggan Thomson, a washed-up Hollywood star best known for playing Birdman – a superhero clearly analogous to, well, who do you think? Tired of his flagging blockbuster career, he embarks on a quest for authenticity by staging a Broadway adaptation of Raymond Carver's short story "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love". It's a terrible idea from the start, and he's surrounded by ham actors, alcoholics (Edward Norton, on dangerous form) and a daughter who appears to hate him (Emma

**There's a barrage of winky in-jokes at the expense of the industry and its super-obsession**

Stone). As the pressure of a looming opening night mounts he becomes increasingly detached from reality. We see him levitate in his room, argue with his Birdman costume (who talks back, hilariously, in a Christian Bale growl) and soar high above the streets of New York.

It's all just fantasy – isn't it? By the end of the film that's less clear, which will annoy some. If you're a fan of straightforward narratives *Birdman* may leave you cold, though it's not a difficult movie at all. Accusations that it's a little on the smug side are also not entirely unfounded – it's arch and pointedly artificial in a way that would give Wes Anderson pause, and there's a barrage of winky in-jokes at the expense of the industry and its current super-obsession.

There's no more obvious example of this than Keaton himself. *Birdman* would have worked fine with another actor in the lead, but the fact that it stars the '80s/'90s Batman (who also walked away from a series of sequels) heightens things considerably. It's more than just a headline-grabbing gag: Keaton is mesmerising and nuanced, the manic intensity that he does so well tempered by Riggan's pain and confusion. Riggan's funny – an entitled, arrogant, deluded "Hollywood clown" – but he's also completely sympathetic. His motivations may be self-centred, but he really is putting everything he's got into his ridiculous play.

Keaton's surrounded by a sterling cast. Norton's Mike Shiner brings ticket sales and headaches as an unhinged Serious Theatre Actor – though Norton's own past as the Hulk is acknowledged in one of the film's more subtly amusing jabs. Yet



**Ninth rule of Fight Club: it's more fun in your pants.**

another superhero-escapee comes in the form of Emma Stone, who is terrific as Sam, Riggan's troubled daughter. She's acidic and funny and relatable in precisely the way that the rest of cast aren't. In one scene she rips into her dad for his years of selfish bullshit but, with a single disintegrating sneer, reveals a world of pain and regret. Andrea Riseborough, Zach Galifianakis and Naomi Watts are given less showy material, but are all excellent.

But the real stars here are Iñárritu and cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki. The film takes place across several days, but is rendered in one

seamless cut. It's a trick, of course – there are plenty of edit points, skilfully disguised, but it gives the film a dizzying, dream-like feel that matches its moments of magic realism. It's an absolutely gorgeous looking piece of work. Individual setpieces, meanwhile, are expertly realised: a scene where Riggan accidentally streaks through Times Square is like a nudity nightmare brought to disorientating and horribly funny life.

Some have interpreted the film's attitude to Hollywood's sequelitis as an attack on superhero cinema in general, but it's not quite as





straightforward as that. There are some snappy barbs (when told that Jeremy Renner isn't available to appear in the play because he's, y'know, an Avenger, Riggan despairingly spits, "Fuck, they put him in a cape, too?!") but the world of the theatre that Riggan's so desperate to be a part of is just as compromised. When Lindsay Duncan's poisonous critic sets out to destroy the play without having seen it, she just seems like a pompous and mean-spirited caricature. Showbusiness, the film seems to say, cultivates monsters and maniacs.

*Birdman* is film that defies simple "this is what it's all about" analysis,

while offering plenty of moments to muse on over multiple viewings. Sure, it's a critique of vapid spectacle, but it's also a moving portrait of a shitty dad coming to terms with his failings. It echoes Scorsese's finest works (*King Of Comedy* and *Taxi Driver*, obvs) while being completely its own film. It goes without saying that it's Keaton's finest screen performance to date, but above all, it's brilliantly, blisteringly funny.

**EXTRAS:** There's a small, but decent, nest of extras here.

"Birdman: All Access" is a half-hour Making Of documentary that goes

behind the scenes of the complex filming process with Iñárritu. It was by all accounts an incredibly tricky movie to make, with the actors required to learn many pages of dialogue for each (long) scene. Featurette "A Conversation With Michael Keaton And Alejandro G Iñárritu" finds the director and his star discussing their intentions for the film. There's also a gallery of cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki's on-set photography.

**Will Salmon**

**?** Iñárritu originally wanted a cameo from Johnny Depp as another actor hounded by his film alter ego - in his case Jack Sparrow.

## Avian Avengers

Four more feathered flying fellows

### BIRDMAN

► This Birdman was the hero of '60s Hanna-Barbera toon *Birdman And The Galaxy Trio*, a solar-powered, bewinged crimefighter given his powers by the sun god Ra. The character was later revived for spoofy Adult Swim animation *Harvey Birdman, Attorney At Law*.



### CONDORMAN

► In this 1981 Disney film, a comic book writer (Michael Crawford) gets mixed up in the world of international espionage, and ends up using a wing-suit based on his latest creation to rescue a beautiful KGB defector (Bond girl Barbara Carrera).



### HAWKMAN

► There've been several incarnations of this hero, but our favourite is the '40s original: archaeologist Carter Hall. The reincarnation of an ancient Egyptian prince, he flies with the aid of a belt made of gravity-defying "nth metal" from the planet Thanagar.

### THE FALCON

► Mainstream comics' first African-American superhero. Mentally fused with a falcon by the powers of the Cosmic Cube, Harlem pigeon-enthusiast Sam Wilson was given the power to control birds, see through their eyes, and, presumably, unleash a deluge of splattery poo on his enemies.





## Big Hero 6

Baymax Factor

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 25 May

2014 | PG | Blu-ray 3D/Blu-ray/DVD

Directors: Don Hall, Chris Williams

Cast: Scott Adsit, Ryan Potter, TJ Miller, Jamie Chung, Damon Wayans Jr, Genesis Rodriguez, James Cromwell, Alan Tudyk



### IT WAS ONLY A

matter of time before Disney pulled together two heads of its giant multinational hydra to form an all-conquering movie superteam – the only surprise is that it didn't happen sooner.

With *Big Hero 6* the Mouse House's animation studio adapts a lesser-known Marvel comic, and the resulting hybrid is rather wonderful.

Existing outside the Marvel Cinematic Universe in the city of San Fransokyo (the geography's San Francisco, the architecture's Tokyo), it's a pure, unashamed superhero origin story about an unlikely sextet coming together to thwart a Big Bad. Like *The Incredibles*, it totally gets the conventions of superhero movies (even down to a Stan Lee cameo), while weaving a tale more human and relatable than many of its live-action brethren can manage. The eponymous gang aren't super, they're just

science geeks who come good, and they're so beautifully rendered that you're emotionally invested in their journey from ordinary kids to heroes via bereavement and revenge.

The whole thing is beautiful to look at, and in squashy inflatable medical robot Baymax, the movie has a true breakout star. You will want one of your own.

A deserving winner of this year's Best Animated Feature Oscar – and no, we haven't forgotten about *The Lego Movie*.

**EXTRAS:** In "The Origin Story Of Big Hero 6" (15 minutes), voice star Jamie Chung wanders the streets of San Francisco, introducing talking head appearances from filmmakers and Marvel bigwigs like Joe Quesada and Jeph Loeb – it's brief but fact-packed. In "Big Animator 6" (six minutes), a bunch of animators sit in a room to talk about their process. Four deleted scenes (mostly storyboard footage, totalling 13 minutes) reveal some interesting alternative ideas for storytelling. There's also "Feast" (six minutes), the sweet short that accompanied the movie in cinemas; a Mickey Mouse cartoon (four mins); and a trailer.

Richard Edwards

Baymax's face was inspired by a temple bell, while his walk was based on a baby with a full nappy.

Seconds later his head was off.



## Spring

Roman Holiday

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 25 May

2015 | TBC | TBC/DVD

Directors: Justin Benson, Aaron Moorhead

Cast: Lou Taylor Pucci, Nadia Hilker, Francesco Carmelutti, Jeremy Gardner, Nick Nevern

### THE LESS YOU KNOW ABOUT

the plot of *Spring*, the better it'll work for you. It's a film of surprises, a slowly unravelling mystery that will lose much of its power if you know what's coming. So let's just say that it's about a newly-orphaned twentysomething called Evan (Lou Taylor Pucci) who decides to spend his inheritance on a trip to Italy. There, he falls in love with evolutionary science student Louise (Nadia Hilker). And then something terrifying happens. Even that might be saying too much, because if you didn't know this was a horror movie, you might not guess for quite a while.

Carefully constructed to make the most of both its talented cast and its sunny Mediterranean setting, *Spring* makes Evan's holiday look idyllic; the Italian tourism industry should have no complaints. Louise and Evan's rapid intimacy is convincing, and though Pucci isn't exactly the typical

romantic lead, his big-eyed naivety helps sell the intensity of his character's emotions. You could almost believe you're watching a Richard Linklater-style romance.

There are early hints that something more sinister is going on, though, including musical cues and rotting plants. Really, *Spring* belongs to a newish tradition of slow, introspective horror that includes *Let The Right One In*, *Byzantium* and *Only Lovers Left Alive*. It's a talky two-hander that's preoccupied with ideas of love and death, and it soon

And then the bus hit them.



## A talky two-hander preoccupied with love and death

becomes clear that the Italian setting was chosen for more than just the weather. The looming spectre of Mount Vesuvius adds menace, while the art galleries the couple traipse around gain extra significance once the film shows its hand.

There's sometimes a danger of *Spring* getting too obsessed with its own mythology and themes, but any heavy-handedness is compensated for by the script's deadpan humour – which also makes the more fantastical moments easier to swallow. The ending could've done with a touch more ambiguity, and the film goes on too long by at least 15 minutes, but it's still a journey worth tagging along for.

**EXTRAS:** To be confirmed at time of going to press. Sarah Dobbs

The writer/directors worked hard on Louise's character. They wanted to make their mums and girlfriends proud of her.



# Into The Woods

Sing a song of Sondheim

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**Release Date:** 18 May

2014 | PG | Blu-ray/DVD

Director: Rob Marshall

Cast: James Corden, Emily Blunt, Meryl Streep, Anna Kendrick, Daniel Hirtlestone, Lilla Crawford



**MUSICALS CAN** be tricky things to translate onto screen – while there are plenty of show-stopping movie

versions, they've more often been the preserve of Disney-lite children's films than the emotional intensities seen on stage. And Stephen Sondheim is worlds away from "lite", so can a film version of one of his most treasured works make it on the screen? With a screenplay by original writer James Lapine, it can.

The plot is a mish-mash of all your favourite fairy stories. A baker and his wife learn the reason for

their childlessness is a curse put on his family by a witch (Meryl Streep). In order to lift it, they must bring back a red cape (guess whose), yellow hair (let down from a tower, maybe?), a golden shoe (like one left on the palace steps) and a milk-white cow, here offered for sale by a young lad named Jack. The first half of the film deals with the couple's travels through the woods as they interact with all the classic stories.

There's a tonal shift for the second half of the tale, and it's this that many non-Sondheim fans struggle with. The film's version isn't quite as brutal as the original, but still, no one gets their hoped-for

## A mish-mash of all your favourite fairy stories



The leaf-collectors strike infuriated everyone.

happy ending. That's not a bad thing, though, and a grittier reality in which actions have consequences, and even giants leave behind people that mourn them, makes for a more mature, sophisticated take on often-saccharine fairytales.

It's pretty perfectly cast, too – James Corden and Emily Blunt are compelling as the heart of the story, though Corden's voice isn't really strong enough for his dual role as narrator. New Captain Kirk Chris Pine proves himself a considerably

better singer than William Shatner as one of the princes, while Anna Kendrick adds charm as an indecisive Cinderella. Not really one for kids, but adults are in for a treat.

**EXTRAS:** Commentary by the director and a producer; an extra song, cut from the film; five further brief deleted scenes; a Making Of (29 minutes); two featurettes (22 minutes). **Rhian Drinkwater**

There is a more child-friendly version of the original for school performances, which leaves out the darker second half.

## Wyrwood

Down Under Of The Dead

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**Release Date:** 11 May

2015 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD

Director: Kiah Roache-Turner

Cast: Jay Gallagher, Bianca Bradey, Leon Burchill, Keith Agius, Berynn Schwerdt, Luke McKenzie



**WHEN IT COMES** to Antipodean zombie movies there's little of note – so little, in fact, that this action-packed Aussie effort might be the best to emerge from the region since Peter Jackson's 1992 Kiwi splatterfest *Braindead*.

That's largely cos *Wyrwood* (the title nods to the Book of Revelation) has a couple of intriguingly original ideas. Its zombies have flammable blood, which means they can be tapped as a fuel source – and allows for both sprinting à la *28 Days Later* and classic George Romero-style shambling. And one central character (a kickass heroine) has the inexplicable ability to mentally control the undead – handy when she's abducted by a sadistic scientist who takes a demented delight in experimentation...



Never insult Dame Edna.

It's a satisfyingly frenetic film, with laconic, swear-heavy dialogue and lashings of violence (nailgun killings; a finger bitten off; a face set on fire), and the *Mad Max*-esque armoured vehicle our heroes travel about in is pretty cool. But frustratingly, neither of those two key innovations is adequately explained or explored (perhaps they're leaving that for a sequel?). As a result, in the end *Wyrwood* just runs out of gas.

**EXTRAS:** Lively commentary by the director and his producer brother; 47 minutes of random behind-the-scenes footage, enjoyably chocka with larking about; 18 minutes of deleted scenes; some cartoonish storyboards; crowdfunding videos. **Ian Berriman**

The script evolved a lot while the film was being shot: the two main characters were originally lovers, but ended up siblings.

## Twice-Told Tales

Three times the Price

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**Release Date:** 18 May

1963 | 12 | DVD

Director: Sidney Salkow

Cast: Vincent Price, Joyce Taylor, Sebastian Cabot, Brett Halsey, Beverly Garland, Richard Denning



**THREE** adaptations of tales by nineteenth century American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne make up this horror anthology, which could be mistaken for one of Roger Corman's pictures of the era, in that it stars Vincent Price and is "tightly" budgeted.

First story "Dr Heidegger's Experiment" is probably the best. Price is the friend of the titular doctor who discovers a water supply that appears to restore youth, but of course there's a shock in store – which provides the movie's most memorable image. Silly but fun.

Even dafter is "Rappaccini's Daughter", in which Price plays a sort of twisted Alan Titchmarsh, inoculating his daughter with poison so she can never leave his garden of venomous plants. Like



Price's attacker had seen better days.

its predecessor, it's shot on a couple of cramped sets, but has a modicum of twisted appeal.

Final tale "The House Of The Seven Gables" concerns a family curse that here manifests itself by frightening a lady in a spooky house. This much-compressed adaptation of Hawthorne's novel still manages to feel a little sluggish, with the excitable soundtrack writing cheques that the script can't cash. It's essentially an old-fashioned scare story, and emblematic of its encompassing film. By the end of the '60s these sorts of genteel, stately US horror films would be blown away by the new wave – a shame, but absolutely inevitable. **EXTRAS:** Just an image gallery. **Russell Lewin**

Vincent Price also starred in a 1940 film of *The House Of The Seven Gables*, which didn't have a supernatural angle.





The firing squad just couldn't quite pull the triggers...

## Moondial

Nostalgia ain't what it used to be

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**Release Date:** 4 May

1988 | PG | DVD

**Director:** Colin Cant

**Cast:** Siri Neal, Tony Sands, Helena Avellano, Jacqueline Pearce, Arthur Hewlett, Valerie Lush



### MODERN-DAY

kids might get to enjoy *Doctor Who* or *Adventure Time*, but the poor deprived things never knew

*Chocky*, *Children Of The Stones* or the original BBC *Narnia* adaptations... Aaah, nostalgia. There's always the unpleasant possibility, of course, that those series were never quite as perfect as they seemed to our pre-teen minds...

Adapted by Helen Cresswell from her own novel, *Moondial* is the story of Minty, who's staying with a family friend when her mother is ill.

Exploring the grounds of a nearby mansion, she discovers the "moondial" there can transport her through

time. Minty meets Tom, an abused servant in the Victorian mansion, and they find Sarah, a girl from an earlier century who's persecuted by the terrifying Miss Vole (Jacqueline Pearce). As Minty's mother recovers, she tries to free the two children before Miss Vole's modern-day counterpart learns the truth.

If you have fond memories of this show they might be enough to help you enjoy this release through nostalgia-tinted glasses – but maybe not. For non-fans, there's little to captivate here. The story feels incoherent, with little to explain the moondial, Miss Vole or what exactly happens to the children once they are "freed". And a dreamy and occasionally haunting atmosphere is sadly not enough to compensate for the show's slow pacing, precocious child actors and disjointed feel.

**EXTRAS:** None. **Rhian Drinkwater**

**?** Helen Cresswell also wrote and adapted the *Lizzie Dripping* books, and penned the TV adaptation of *The Demon Headmaster*.



Carol struggled to keep focus.

## Frequencies

The Luck Of Love

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

2013 | 12 | DVD/download

**Director:** Darren Paul Fisher

**Cast:** Daniel Fraser, Eleanor Wylie, Dylan Llewellyn, Georgina Minter-Brown, Charlie Rixon, Lily Laight



### THERE'S A

wonderfully quirky high concept at the heart of this low-budget Brit-flick, of a kind you normally wouldn't see outside of a film by Michel Gondry or Spike Jonze. But at its heart, *Frequencies* is far more SF thriller than black comedy, and that works both for and against it.

The story takes place in a world where luck is a form of energy. High frequency people are the luckiest; low frequency ones the unluckiest. However, the higher frequency you are, the less emotional you become. When, as schoolchildren, the very low frequency Zak meets the very high frequency Marie, they discover

they cannot be near to each other for more than a minute without disaster happening. He falls in love with her; she becomes fascinated by him, on a scientific curiosity level.

The early stages of the film, following Zak and Marie from their schooldays to young adulthood, are sweet, intriguing and character-led, with some clever storytelling devices. However, although there are hints of deadpan humour, it's less witty and more earnest than something like *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind* or *Her*.

Then, halfway through, a whole new SF concept gatecrashes the story, and the film becomes plot-driven. It's a decent enough idea in itself, but it changes the film from "indie-arthouse" to "Syfy movie of the week". Which is a shame, as it was doing just fine as it was.

**EXTRAS:** None. **Dave Golder**

**?** The spark for the idea: on a date, the director bought raffle tickets with a girl who said she "usually wins"... and she did!

## ROUND-UP

### THE ASYLUM

**Release Date:** 4 May

2015 | 18 | DVD



The latest from Marcus Nispel (director of the remakes of *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, *Conan The Barbarian* and *Friday The 13th*) doesn't exactly have an excitingly original premise – teens partying in an abandoned mental institution end up being picked off one by one after unleashing a possessing evil force – but may well appeal if you're a fan of *The Evil Dead*, and like your horror to have a knowing attitude. Originally known as *Backmask*, its dialogue is pretty dodgy, but the deaths are enjoyably gory, and there are some decent self-aware gags – this is the sort of movie where the characters know full well that using a Ouija board is not likely to end well...

### THE LAST SURVIVORS

**Release Date:** 4 May

2015 | 15 | DVD



This post-apocalyptic film (also known as *The Well*) is set in a future where water is priceless, since it hasn't rained for 10 years (yep, it's not set in Manchester). It centres on a young woman, Kendal (Haley Lu Richardson), who must protect her well – and her friends – from a ruthless "Water Baron" and his lackeys; needless to say, it ends in violent confrontation (with shades of a revenge Western). It's not without tension and, thanks to some attractive cinematography, the Oregon dust bowl setting is certainly atmospheric, but the world is frustratingly under-explained, and given the premise the heroine *really* shouldn't look like she's just stepped out of a salon...

### RIGOR MORTIS

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

2013 | 15 | DVD



Fans of Hong Kong "hopping vampire" horror-comedies of the '80s like *Mr Vampire* will be interested in this homage – but may be disappointed, since director Juno Mak's aim was to deconstruct the genre; in the process, he dropped the comedy. Mixing sentimentality with scares and silliness, it follows a failed actor who moves into a haunted tenement. We said: "Stylishly shot and packed with performances far better than the patchy script deserves... they steal the show from some intense visual effects and memorable monsters. But the film spends too much time being po-faced. It's a shame that Mak has brought a much-loved genre back from the dead whilst leaving behind its soul."

### VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

1995 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD



A UK Blu-ray debut for John Carpenter's pointless remake of the eerie 1960 classic based on John Wyndham novel *The Midwich Cuckoos*, in which, after a whole village mysteriously blacks out, women give birth to emotionless, other-worldly children with terrifying mental powers. Christopher Reeve stars, in his last role before he was paralysed. Transplanting events from Britain to California, it's a lethargic affair which adds nothing of any real value: one of the creepy kids is now more humanised, plus there's a goes-nowhere government conspiracy subplot, and lashings of macabre violence (for example, during the blackout, someone falls asleep on a barbecue...).





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# MONOLITH

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A collage of various toys and models. At the top, there's a Star Trek Enterprise ship, a TARDIS, and a Predator. Below these are Star Wars characters like Stormtroopers, Darth Vader, and R2-D2. In the center, there's a Transformer (Optimus Prime) and a Goldenrod. To the right, there's a Dalek and a Thomas the Tank Engine train. The background is a mix of red and white with some blue and yellow accents.

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# The Lost Worlds Of Gerry Anderson

String theory and beyond

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
**Release Date:** OUT NOW!  
 1956-1992 | 12 | DVD  
 Creator: Gerry Anderson  
 Cast: Shane Rimmer, Brian Blessed, Nick Tate, Nicholas Parsons, Ed Bishop, Peter Dinkley



## GERRY

Anderson's legacy is unassailable. *Thunderbirds*, *Stingray*, *Captain Scarlet*. Gems of Brit telly, exploding

with imagination and charm, his muse on fire. But what lurks beneath this quality threshold? What's rattling around in Gerry Anderson's bottom drawer?

This two-disc set gathers oddments and rarities from the string king's career, some strange, some weak, all fairly fascinating. There are a couple of starchy curios: post-war magazine show *You've Never Seen This* marks Anderson's directorial debut, while *Blue Skies*

*Ahead* finds Nicholas Parsons in his tweedy '50s pomp, extolling the virtues of Majorca in chilly black and white.

1973's *The Investigator* is infinitely more interesting to Anderson fans. A misfiring pilot mixing puppets and live action, it's a weirdly forlorn thing, its young heroes reduced to marionettes by a glowing "voice from the future", the better to fight crime. They don't seem to have had much say in this. After trundling around Malta in a tiny, eight-wheeled car they perch on cliffs, looking rather sad. It's existentially peculiar even by Anderson's standards.

*The Day After Tomorrow* is a mid-'70s blast into a black hole, *Interstellar* by way of Open University, while *Space Police* is a clunky, synth-drenched early pass at *Space Precinct*, its animatronic aliens preserving a final slice of puppet show charm.



Failed pilot *The Investigator* – not the new *Top Gear* presenters.

An unscreened episode of *Dick Spanner PI* rounds it all off. Anderson's into Plasticine now, and while the animation has a wonky, "Sledgehammer" video charm, its crass, laddish gags and dodgy racial caricatures feel beneath him. It's clear that his muse has gone. Maybe she was called Sylvia after all.

**EXTRAS:** Here Comes Kandy, a kids' puppet show pilot from 1956; *Blue Cars*; *Martians*, an SF-themed live-action commercial; a collection of original film elements for *Space Police*, including test footage; photo galleries. **Nick Setchfield**

❓ In the late '70s Gerry Anderson created *Thunderbirds*-styled ads for Jif Dessert Toppings. They're not included here, sadly.

## Continuum Season Three

Terrorist timeline troubles

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
**Release Date:** OUT NOW!  
 2014 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD  
 Creator: Simon Barry  
 Cast: Rachel Nichols, Erik Knudsen, Victor Webster, Stephen Lobo, Lexa Doig



## IF YOU WERE

having trouble following the convoluted plotting during seasons one and two of

*Continuum*, you might as well give up now and bail on the adventures of Keira Cameron and her terrorist timeline woes. If, however, you've lapped up all the temporal twists and turns of this cunning little series, you'll bloody love this newest batch of 13 episodes.

We pick up this year with Keira stuck in Freelancer prison, while Alec has travelled back in time to save the life of the woman he loves. It's not long before there are doppelgangers everywhere and characters we *thought* were good guys or bad guys suddenly flip like



Nigel Farage had just walked in.

pancakes – moral ambiguity is what *Continuum* does best, after all. It's also rather good at giving us unexpected deaths, fantastic fight scenes and a season finale that will kick you so hard in the goolies you'll be bruised for a week.

The downsides of season three, however, are that the writing doesn't feel quite as focused as its first two years, and Keira has now changed so much it's getting tough to empathise with her. Despite this, however, *Continuum* is still a damn fine series.

**EXTRAS:** Two commentaries (on "Minute By Minute" and "Last Minute") from Simon Barry and executive producer/director Pat Williams, 13 decent webisodes, and a half-hour behind-the-scenes piece. **Jayne Nelson**

❓ All episodes in season one had "Time" in their title. In season two, it was "Second". Season three? "Minute".

## Automata

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
**Release Date:** 11 May  
 2014 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD



## IN THE YEAR

2044, most of the world's population has been wiped out by solar flares. The survivors created a race of robots, named Pilgrims, to help rebuild society, programming them with two protocols: they may not harm any form of life and they may not modify themselves or any other robot.

So what happens when they find an override to the second rule? With robots now about to self-repair and upgrade at will, the Pilgrims look set to evolve rapidly, leaving mankind behind.

There are a lot of good ideas in *Automata*, but the script doesn't have the courage of its premise. Boring action, cliché-drenched subplots and poor casting torpedo the movie, and only Alejandro Martínez's rich cinematography emerges with any dignity.

**EXTRAS:** Making Of; interview. **Steve O'Brien**

## BLU-RAY DEBUT

## The Serpent And The Rainbow

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
**Release Date:** OUT NOW!  
 1988 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD



## "THE

following is inspired by a true story," declares a title card. By the time a corpse in a bridal gown vomits a snake from its mouth you're either reconsidering your hold on reality or applauding shameless movie hucksterism.

Librally adapting Wade Davis's book about the power of voodoo, this is an unreconstructed '30s zombie flick in '80s drag. A hammy Bill Pullman, dressed for *Miami Vice*, heads to Haiti on behalf of a pharmaceutical company, keen to exploit the juju-wearing locals.

*Nightmare On Elm Street* helmer Wes Craven just about rescues this overcooked tale with a gift for atmosphere and some memorable images, even if a monstrous hand reaching from a bowl of soup is pure Cream of Freddy.

**EXTRAS:** Trailer. **Nick Setchfield**



## Harlock: Space Pirate

Underwhelming space opera

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2013 | 15 | Blu-ray 3D/DVD

Director: Shinji Aramaki

Cast: Shun Oguri, Harumi Miura, Yu Aoi, Arata Furuta, Maaya Sakamoto



**DESPITE THE** title, space pirate Captain Harlock isn't the star of this CG anime spectacular. No, it's his cool pirate ship, an intergalactic Flying Dutchman embossed with a skull, lunging shark-like out of black clouds (yes, in space). The film's press notes invoke the grandeur of *The Dark Knight*, but the style ends up feeling silly, more like the Batman of *The Lego Movie*.

In anime, Captain Harlock has been a space hero since the '70s, an anarchist buccaneer. In past incarnations he often fought aliens, but in this reboot his beef's with humanity – though his agenda's only fully explained midway through the film. The story opens interestingly,



You should see the state of his back.

with a youth joining Harlock's crew who's actually a spy out to kill the Cap. The spectacle is jolly good; it's motion-captured realism, with inevitable comparisons to videogame cutscenes, but it has a lurid splendour. There are rippling capes, jewel-eyed aliens and, of course, *that* pirate ship.

Unfortunately, it soon gets boring. The characters don't come alive, meaning that by the time we get to the big space battles, there's nothing to care about. The plot's almost as silly as *Jupiter Ascending*, and Harlock's illogical actions suggest not an anarchist but an idiot. For a better Japanese space opera, see the live-action *Space Battleship Yamato*.

**EXTRAS:** Just a Making Of.

**Andrew Osmond**

**?** In France, the character is called Albatros, to avoid confusion with the similarly named Captain Haddock from *Tintin*.

## Hooked Up

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2013 | 18 | DVD



**THE BIG NOISE** around this gruesome horror is that it was filmed entirely on an iPhone. Ingenious... and almost entirely pointless, given that the results look exactly like every other found-footage film. Better, in fact – the effects are solid throughout and the gore is pleasingly practical.

Alas, the film itself is a very drab entry into the tourist-horror canon. Americans Peter and Tonio travel to Barcelona to try and get laid. They puke and piss and leer their way through a dull opening 20 minutes, before picking up a couple of girls. Unfortunately, one of them gives Peter a rather intimate and painful love bite... Cue a long, depressing hour of screaming, whimpering and blood.

Loud, obnoxious and boring, the film perfectly reflects its lead characters. A last-minute twist also miserably fails to convince.

**EXTRAS:** None. **Will Salmon**

## Night Of The Wolf: Late Phases

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2014 | 18 | DVD



**THE PROBLEM**

with werewolves is that they traditionally only come out once a month; there's a lot of downtime between one full moon and the next. While most werewolf movies just hit fast-forward, *Night Of The Wolf* uses every long moment to develop its main character.

When a mysterious creature kills his neighbour, blind Vietnam veteran Ambrose McKinley (Nick Damici) tools up. But the real fight isn't with the wolf; it's with his own demons, making this more of a meditation on death and sacrifice than a monster movie.

Thanks to too many loose ends and an unearned emotional sting, it doesn't quite work – but the '80s-style werewolf effects are fun.

**EXTRAS:** Director's commentary, Making Of, effects featurette.

**Sarah Dobbs**

## The Sleeping Room

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 11 May

2014 | 15 | DVD



**THIS TALE OF** seaside seediness falls somewhere between *Broadchurch* and *The Woman In Black*. It follows Blue

(Leila Mimmack), a call girl who discovers a stash of Victorian snuff movies and attracts the ire of a murderous spirit.

The first half is nicely atmospheric, with loving shots of Brighton and a brooding score. Mimmack is a strong lead, too.

The carefully balanced tone slips as the supernatural elements come to the fore, and the ending is messy, but overall this is solid and effective. Can we call a moratorium on horror villains wearing hessian masks now, though?

**EXTRAS:** A three-minute short, an interview with director John Shackleton, an effects featurette, behind-the-scenes footage, a trailer and a gallery. **Will Salmon**

## World War Dead: Rise Of The Fallen

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 4 May

2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD



**IF YOU HAVEN'T** already sworn off low-budget zombie movies, this might be the final straw. When a hapless

documentary crew heads off to film at the site of the Battle of the Somme, you'll find yourself rolling your eyes as the found footage clichés stack up. And when they steal a mystical amulet off a skeleton, you'll be tempted to switch off completely.

You wouldn't miss much, either. Everything unfolds exactly as you'd imagine. In one scene, the fictional production crew discusses the ethics of turning human tragedy into entertainment – it's a conversation the real filmmakers probably should have had, too, if not out of respect for the dead, then for the horror fans who've already seen enough of this crap.

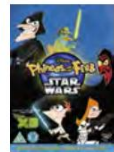
**EXTRAS:** None. **Sarah Dobbs**

## Phineas And Ferb: Star Wars

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2014 | U | DVD/download



After *Spaceballs*, *Troops*, *Family Guy: Blue Harvest* and *Robot Chicken: Star Wars* you'd think the universe had run dry of *Star Wars* gags.

Watching this latest skit from Disney Channel cartoon *Phineas And Ferb* only serves to reinforce that suspicion. The show, a kind of *Family-Friendly Guy* with a cult following, does bring two innovations to the table: the cartoon's characters are inserted into the plot of *Episode IV* *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern-style*, having their own, parallel adventure. Plus: musical-style song and dance numbers. AT-AT's entertainment!

It's mildly fun, but relies too heavily on the show's own running gags to appeal much beyond *Phineas And Ferb* fans.

**EXTRAS:** Five further episodes.

**Dave Golder**

## Chastity Bites

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2014 | 15 | DVD



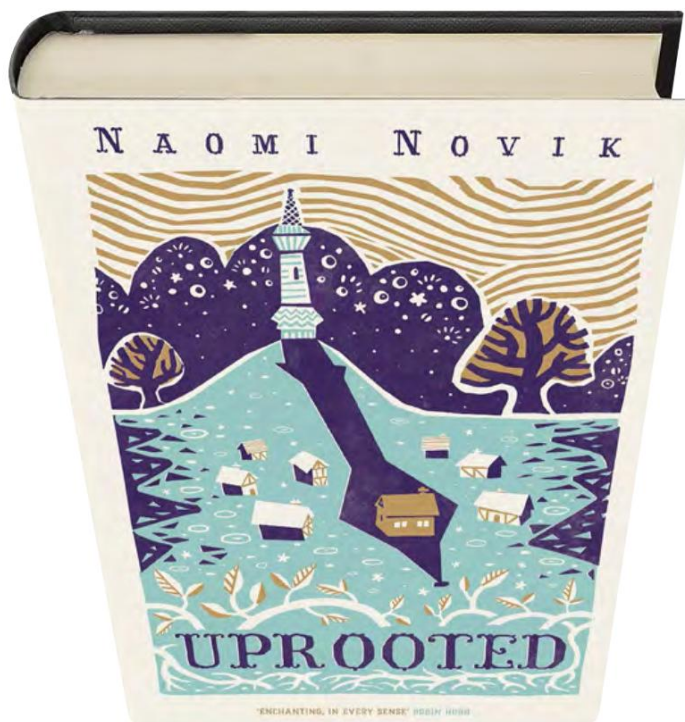
**EVEN**

*Warehouse 13*'s ace Allison Scagliotti can't save this dire horror-comedy that's about as scary as a box full of kittens and as funny as flesh-eating bacteria. Scagliotti stars as Leah, the local high school's token feminist, who takes against abstinence councillor Liz Bathos with good reason: Liz is really a centuries-old Hungarian countess who murders virgins and bathes in their blood to stay young (yep, it's another riff on the notorious Countess Bathory).

The plot is bobbins, the performances less restrained than what you'd expect from the average pantomime, the gags fall awkwardly flat every single time and Hammer was doing more convincing gore in the '50s. It has aspirations to be *Mean Girls* meets *Cherry Falls* but falls desperately short of both.

**EXTRAS:** Trailer. **Jordan Farley**





# Uprooted

If you go down to the Wood today...

★★★★★  
**Release Date:** 21 May  
 440 pages | Hardback/ebook  
 Author: Naomi Novik  
 Publisher: Macmillan

**POPULARITY HAS ITS** drawbacks. Like film stars, authors get typecast: whether it's a bestselling series, a much-loved (or loathed) protagonist, or a specific mode of writing, they can be victims of their own success, as publishers and readers alike clamour for more of the same. Some resort to pseudonyms to write in a different genre, whether that be JK Rowling publishing crime fiction as Robert Galbraith, or Margaret Astrid Lindholm Ogden creating urban fantasy as Megan Lindholm and epic fantasy as Robin Hobb. A few authors – like George RR Martin – even get roundly abused by sections of their fanbase for daring to do so much as think about doing something that takes time away from the book their “brand” is linked with.

Nothing so extreme for Naomi Novik, thankfully. But having called a halt to the bestselling (and enormously fun) *Temeraire* series

after nine books of Napoleonic dragon action, she's ensured that there's a weight of expectation attached to her first novel outside that world. Inspired by the folktales that Novik heard as a child from her Polish mother, *Uprooted* has what appears, at first, to be a fairly simple premise. In a valley beside a scary enchanted forest (sorry, Wood), there lives a wizard in a tower and a girl in a village. Once every ten years, said wizard plucks out a 17-year-old girl from the villages under his protection, and takes her to his tower to act as his companion and sort-of servant. As the novel opens, the ten-year cycle is up once again, and our heroine Agnieszka just happens to be 17. Everyone's convinced that pretty, brave and accomplished Kasia will be taken as tribute, not her clumsy and unremarkable best friend Agnieszka, but... we all know where this one's going, don't we?

It transpires that Agnieszka has unrecognised magical talent, and the wizard – known as the Dragon – is duty-bound to train her up. Wizard and reluctant apprentice bicker, exchange glares, misunderstand one

another, and gradually start to make beautiful magic together; various trials and dangers related to the Wood enable Agnieszka to grow in confidence and ability, and start to prove herself.

That magic is vivid and visceral. We get a clear sense of its physical toll upon its users and its targets, through both characters' experiences and beautiful, brutal imagery; crafting spells is likened variously to music, cooking, sex and violence, and Novik's deft use of figurative language brings the whole thing to stunning life. There are trees that absorb people into their trunks, coating them in sticky sap and hard-as-nails bark while they eat their victims' personalities from the inside out. An expensive type of fire-starting potion is so gleefully keen to burn things that it tries to push its way out of the vial if you're foolish enough to open it too far. Novik's magic reads, in short, like a sort of cross between dreaming, storytelling, and taking hallucinogenic drugs.

Within the framework of this tale, there's a lot more going on. The story twists and turns in ways that grow organically from the characters' personalities and relationships, and are closely integrated with the world-building. This world has cultural depth as well as landscape

## Cleverly plotted and colourfully imaginative

and a magic system: the story emerges in part from the dynamics of interdependence and conflict between elite and peasantry, capital and province, humanity and nature; the tensions of Agnieszka's ambiguous position as an unmarried woman living alone with an older man hamper her interactions with villagers and courtiers alike, as people repeatedly underestimate her, assuming she's the Dragon's mistress. Thematic and plot links between Wood, village and palace unfold in ever more satisfying and complex ways as the novel progresses. This is a richly satisfying read: cleverly plotted, colourfully imaginative, and sharply interesting in the moral dilemmas it poses its characters. **Nic Clarke**

Uprooted was influenced by Novik's favourite Polish fairytale from when she was a girl: “Agnieszka Piece Of The Sky”.



## The Vorrh

Lost in a forest of words

★★★★★  
**Release Date:** 21 May  
 500 pages | Hardback/ebook  
 Author: Brian Catling  
 Publisher: Coronet

**IMAGINE A VAST** primeval forest. Light barely makes its way through the dense canopy, and the tangled underbrush means you can only move with extreme difficulty and effort. Occasionally you glimpse what look like contorted human or animal shapes. The air is filled with weird, incomprehensible noises.

Brian Catling's *The Vorrh* is set in this jungle, and resembles it closely. Understanding barely makes its way through the dense, overwritten prose. The tangled storylines mean you can only follow the plot with extreme effort and difficulty. Contorted human shapes (you can't really call them characters) make weird, incomprehensible speeches.

By day Catling is an artist and a poet, and it shows. He creates vast surreal landscapes, and he uses language with a poet's density of expression. In *The Vorrh*, he's trying to create a Hieronymus Bosch canvas of disturbing half-glimpsed images, a nightmare blend of the familiar and the inconceivable. It'd be wonderful, if it worked.

But it doesn't. The language is too richly poetic; you can't begin to understand or empathise with the inhuman, mostly revolting characters. By the time narrative light breaks through, in the last quarter of the book, it's too late. There are many startlingly vivid images, but no cohesion to give them relevance or meaning.

You can't see the wood for the trees. **Tom Holt**

The title stems from surrealist Raymond Roussel's 1910 novel *Impressions Of Africa*, in which it's the name of a forest.



# Poseidon's Wake

Life's what you make it

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 30 April

608 pages | Hardback/ebook

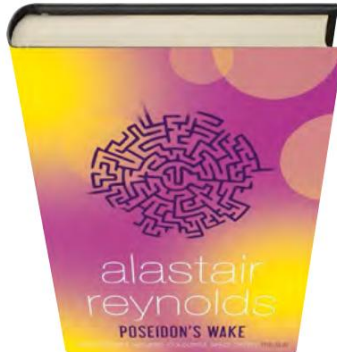
Author: Alastair Reynolds

Publisher: Gollancz

## THERE ARE NOVELS WHERE

it seems clear the author always knew where the story was going. Then there are other novels that, if not quite seeming to have been made up on the fly, show evidence of how the author had to adapt and even ditch ideas in order to get to the end of his narrative. *Poseidon's Wake*, the final offering in Alastair Reynolds's *Poseidon's Children* trilogy, falls into the latter category.

Which initially seems strange because, according to a 2014 blog entry, Reynolds wrote a 12,000-word outline for the book. How to explain this apparent discrepancy? One answer may be that Reynolds initially planned to follow the Akinyas, the powerful African family in the books' foreground, 11,000 years into the future.



Instead, in-flight modifications have been necessary. In particular, while this is a big space adventure exploring what happens when mankind develops a star-hopping civilisation, it's set far closer to our own time than 11 millennia away.

Here, we meet Kanu Akinya, a human ambassador living on a Mars where AIs hold sway; and his niece (more or less), Goma Akinya, who studies "tantors", elephants that possess enhanced intelligence, on a distant, human-colonised world, Crucible. Then a message draws

both to the planetary system around the star Gliese 163.

There they find an iteration of Akinya elder Eunice, vast alien artefacts, deadly machine intelligences, information on how to develop a revolutionary new branch of physics, and clues as to what life might be all about.

Which is going to irritate some who prefer their space-fic unsullied by philosophy, because one way to read it is as an extended riff on the place of our consciousnesses in the universe. Thinking about such matters and adapting his fiction accordingly would also seem a reasonable explanation for the sense of a trilogy that's sometimes confounded Reynolds himself as he's worked through it. But worked through it he has, to craft a novel that works brilliantly as a space adventure and also reads, touchingly, almost as an atheist's reflection on why a kind of optimistic agnosticism may be a useful approach to finding contentment. A flawed novel? Perhaps, but a brave and big-hearted one too. **Jonathan Wright**

❓ "Uplifted" elephants – too unlikely? Well, the creatures' brains are similar to humans in terms of structure and complexity.

## BULLET TIME

A BOOK IN BULLET POINTS

### HARRY POTTER: MAGICAL PLACES FROM THE FILMS

**Release Date:** 8 May

208 pages | Hardback

Author: Jody Revenson

Publisher: Titan Books

- ❶ An in-depth guide to the locations and sets used to create the *Harry Potter* movie saga.
- ❷ A beautiful mix of on-set photos, stunning concept art, and well-chosen comments from the filmmakers.
- ❸ It's remarkable how much of the Pottiverse was created in (or inspired by) real places – as well as being constructed at Leavesden Studios. For instance, Privet Drive is a real street in Bracknell, that was imitated on set after the first movie to avoid disrupting the locals.
- ❹ Includes loads of stories and "did you know" trivia that'll be catnip for fans – like Emma Watson telling the production designers there should be more books in Hermione's room. There's also JK Rowling's original basic-but-effective sketch of the Hogwarts grounds.
- ❺ There are a couple of neat pull-out extras – a guide to The Paintings Of Hogwarts and a map of Diagon Alley.



# Day Shift

Sookie successor sequel

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 7 May

317 pages | Hardback/ebook

Author: Charlaine Harris

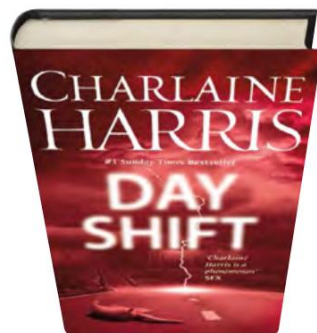
Publisher: Gollancz

## HAVING ENDED SOOKIE

Stackhouse's story, Charlaine Harris can't quite leave the world of the *Southern Vampire Mysteries* behind, as several familiar faces make a reappearance in the little Texan town of Midnight.

To call Midnight a town is a bit misleading; it's basically a crossroads with some houses and shops scattered along it. In the first book in the *Midnight, Texas* series, *Midnight Crossing*, the residents were all revealed to be eccentric verging on the downright weird – Fiji the overweight witch, Manfred the internet psychic, Bobo the pawnshop owner whose vampire landlord resides in his basement, and a scattering of others. It was charming, nonetheless.

On the surface, this second story is Manfred's, as his neighbours rally round to help him after a client he's giving a personal consultation to



dies and he's accused of theft. However, you know there's more to both the hotel reopening and the Rev (the local vicar) taking care of a young child than meets the eye...

How you feel about the reappearance of two of Harris's older characters will depend on your appetite for the *Southern Vampire Mysteries*; your reaction to familiar faces might be delight, but if you felt Sookie's tale had grown stale towards the end, you might be more inclined to groan. Arguably, bringing side characters from those books in just drags the bubbly quaintness of Midnight down.

**Miriam McDonald**

❓ There's also an audiobook version of *Day Shift*. It's narrated by Susan Bennett, better known as the voice of Siri.

# The Book Of Phoenix

Ashes To Ashes

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 7 May

232 pages | Hardback/ebook

Author: Nnedi Okorafor

Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton

## FOR HER FOLLOW-UP TO

last year's *Lagoon*, Nnedi Okorafor has gone back to the past, with a prequel to her World Fantasy Award-winning *Who Fears Death*. To put it simply, *The Book Of Phoenix* is the build-up to the apocalypse that *Who Fears Death* is post.

Like the previous novels, it puts Africa and Africans front and centre of its imagined future, with a particular focus on the relationship between Africans and the United States. Phoenix is an "accelerated organism", born and raised – in a way that gives her four decades of physical and mental development in two years – in one of a network of US laboratories devoted to producing genetically and cybernetically modified beings.

Okorafor draws on communication traditions old and new – first-person oral storytelling, the instant global reach of social



media – and provides a strong sense of place in locations stretching across two continents. Since most of the people used to create the hybrid creatures are African and African-American, she also uses her SF future to explore parallels between the enslavement of Africans in the past, and modern institutional racism and exploitation. Phoenix – who has wings and can set things on fire just by touching them – is an arresting character: thoughtful, rash, caring and increasingly (justifiably) angry. A short, sharp novel, which packs a lot of thematic and action-sequence punch.

**Nic Clarke**

❓ One inspiration: African-American woman Henrietta Lacks, who died in 1951 but whose cells are still used for research.



## The Waterborne Blade

Always leave them wanting more

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 7 May

432 pages | Paperback/ebook

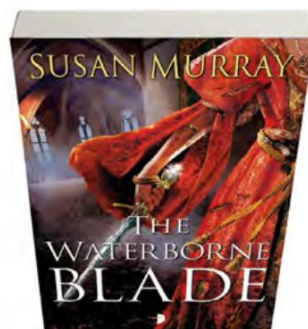
Author: Susan Murray

Publisher: Angry Robot

### SO MANY TRADITIONAL

fantasies start with a hero, generally male, of humble beginnings, learning of their real destiny and leaving the farm life behind, that it's refreshing to find one that starts with a highborn queen and unashamedly makes her the centre of proceedings. There's a rough-around-the-edges soldier who's pledged to protect her, of course, but he's not the real star of this show.

With an army on the way and traitors all around, King Tresilian sends his wife Alwenna and their unborn child off to safety with loyal King's Man Ranald Weaver. She's wary of this strange, sullen soldier, and Weaver has his own secrets and feelings for the queen. But with the capital about to fall to Tresilian's cousin Varis, it's Alwenna's heritage and dormant psychic powers that



are the meat of the story here.

This is a well-paced, enjoyable read with characters that feel rounded and real, changing and evolving as the book goes on. And while it struggles with action scenes, it's in the scheming of courts and cousins, childhood spats and splintering marriages that the writing shines. Unfortunately, after all that plotting and intrigue, with tantalising hints of more secrets to be revealed, you'll have to wait until the sequel (due this summer) for any real resolution. That's not unusual, but it does mean you'll finish the book unsatisfied.

**Rhian Drinkwater**

*This is Murray's debut novel; she met both her agent and editor during one-to-one pitch sessions at York's Festival of Writing.*

## Tabit Genesis

Not All About EVE

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 21 May

416 pages | Paperback/ebook

Author: Tony Gonzales

Publisher: Gollancz

### CLEARLY THE FIRST

volume of a series, *Tabit Genesis* belongs to the genus Space Opera Biggus Hairius, and is acceptably big and hairy, though it's also rather diffuse and lightweight.

In the far future, Earth has been lost to aliens, and surviving humans have set up a fractious mini-society in a distant galaxy – actually, several societies, with bloody beefs between them. One of the main rows is over a new class division between naturally born humans and those grown in machines.

The book splashes around pleasurably with familiar ideas, rather than finding a really grabby hook of its own. The chapters skip between loads of different plotlines and characters: a boy making a wondrous contact with aliens above a gaseous planet; two scary warrior siblings being bred for greatness by their kingly father; and (the best



strand) a deep cover, drug-addled agent who keeps hallucinating a taunting Minotaur. The relationship between this unstable pair is like that between Michael Keaton and his feathered tormentor in *Birdman*.

These stories naturally converge, but their scope and variety comes at the expense of depth or believability. There's lots of pulp melodrama, and great dumpy wedges of expository prose in the early pages. It's still enjoyable, and it'll be interesting to see where the series goes in future books, but for now it feels stuck between novelistic SF and a lower-grade movie tie-in.

**Andrew Osmond**

*Author Tony Gonzales was one of the folk behind space opera MMORPG EVE Online; his previous books were set in its universe.*

## Dreams Of Shreds & Tatters

HP source

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 7 May

320 pages | Paperback/ebook

Author: Amanda Downum

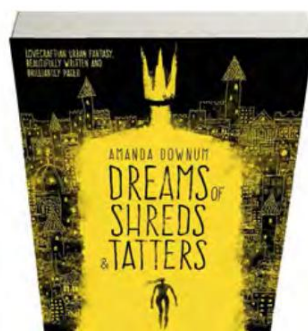
Publisher: Solaris

### FOR MANY, THE NAME

HP Lovecraft means tentacled, sanity-braiding monsters, but the legendary horror writer's work also headed in more lyrical directions, especially in tales like "The Dream-Quest Of Unknown Kadath". It's these peculiar stories that serve as the inspiration for new urban fantasy *Dreams Of Shreds & Tatters* – though the end results are somewhat frustrating.

The plot follows Liz Drake, a woman who has bizarre dreams connected with the disappearance of her artist friend Blake. When she finally locates him, he's comatose in hospital, but the trail leads her to Blake's mysterious artist friends, and a series of unsettling secrets.

It soon transpires that strange dream-creatures are overseeing these events, all in the service of



something monstrous called the Yellow King, but while Lovecraft and *True Detective* fans will appreciate the references, Amanda Downum's take on urban fantasy is heavy on atmosphere yet light on substance.

Despite evocative images and ambitious ideas, the storytelling lacks edge and impact, and this rambling supernatural saga fails to be more than mildly unsettling. There are occasional flickers of the challenging book Downum is trying to deliver, but unengaging central characters and an over-reliance on dream logic leave this fantasy struggling to make it out of second gear. **Saxon Bullock**

*Downum has made a "soundtrack" to the novel including the likes of Bat For Lashes and The Cure: <http://bit.ly/dreamsST>.*

## Drama And Delight

Verity Important Person

★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

379 pages | Hardback

Author: Richard Marson

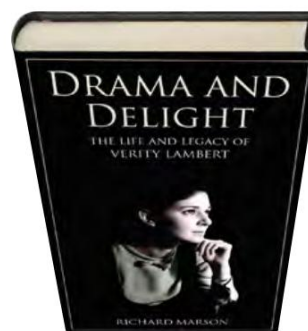
Publisher: Mink

### RICHARD MARSON'S

biography of '80s *Doctor Who* producer John Nathan-Turner was scandalous stuff. This life of first incumbent Verity Lambert can't hope to compete. Plus, since her two seasons were just a small part of a long and successful career, it has a lot less to offer *Who* fans – less than 30 pages.

However, it does share that previous book's strengths. It's meticulously researched, drawing on BBC memos, old interviews and fresh discussions with friends and colleagues. It's no hagiography; and once again no question is off-limits. In *JN-T* that meant asking, "Was he a paedophile?" Here, it's, "Did she get the *Who* job by screwing her boss?" The consensus is no... but some still insist that she did.

Plain speaking is plentiful, particularly from *Who* director Richard Martin – Dalek creator Terry



Nation was, he bluntly states, "A fucking awful writer". One suspects the formidably forthright producer – nicknamed "Fishwife Lambert" at Thames Television – would have approved. If your existing impression of her stems from BBC Two drama *An Adventure In Space And Time*'s diluted depiction, prepare to have it blown away.

Inevitably, the book becomes less absorbing the higher Lambert climbs the career ladder – management disputes are less diverting than on-set anecdotes. But it remains a fascinating read for anyone with a wide-ranging interest in TV history. **Ian Berriman**

*Who* director Richard Martin nicknamed Lambert "Very-titty" – and unfortunately, he once accidentally said it to her face...



## Starborn

It's a kind of magic



**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

400 pages | Hardback/ebook

Author: Lucy Hounsom

Publisher: Tor

### WITH PARANORMAL

romance and urban fantasy often dominating the shelves, it's good to have a solid, traditional fantasy to settle down to. And one with a female protagonist is already setting itself up ahead of the curve.

Kyndra is an average girl living an average life in her small town, awaiting the day when she will become an adult and receive her inheritance – the knowledge of her true name and destiny – along with all the young people in her homeland. But a day that should have been full of hope goes tragically wrong and her neighbours turn on her, leaving her to be rescued by two passing strangers, wielders of magic who insist she leaves with them. As Kyndra travels closer to their home of Naris, she learns more of the day/night magic of the sun and the moon, while flashbacks to a past she never knew keep filling her mind.



She's also being followed by a man her saviours insist is dangerous, but who passes her stories of the third, rarer type of magic – that used by the powerful Starborn.

It's a solid take on a classic genre, while never quite leaving the zone of comfortable fantasy. Derivative at times and slow to start, *Starborn* nonetheless develops into a solid, enjoyable tale that probably won't end quite where you expect. And though you may want to shake Kyndra for her lack of self-awareness about her memories and her powers, she's still a well-drawn, rounded character you'll find it easy to root for. **Rhian Drinkwater**

**?** Hounsom researched many subjects, and pored over pictures of burns injuries so she could accurately describe them.

## When The Heavens Fall

Long and winding roads



**Release Date:** 22 May

544 pages | Paperback

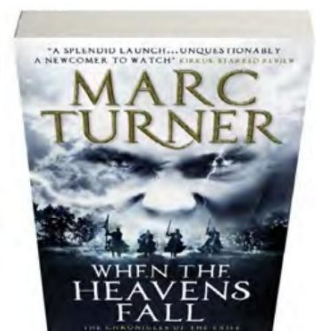
Author: Marc Turner

Publisher: Titan Books

### A LOT OF FANTASY CALLS

itself "epic", but many books fall short of matching the enormous scope of the word. An epic fantasy should have armies, gods and monsters, quests and magic, the dread, the undead and the living. By design, if there's a quest mechanic (destroy a ring, or in this case retrieve a book), then there's also got to be lots of journeying via fantastical waypoints, with a few hair-raising sword and sorcery encounters along the way. *When The Heavens Fall* is chock full of such epic-ness.

Perhaps it's too much. An epic fantasy requires a large cast, and Marc Turner's debut novel follows four main POV characters: Luker (a Jedi-style Guardian), Romany (a priestess of the Spider goddess), Ebon (prince of under-siege Galitia) and Parolla (a sorceress who seeks



vengeance with the Shroud, Lord of the Dead). Each one has their own reasons to hunt down the Book of Lost Souls, which gives its owner the power to command an army of the undead. Some want to destroy the book, others to use it for their own ends.

There's conflict a-plenty and a world built with RPG levels of depth. But while four POVs can keep a narrative fresh, it can also bog a story down. There are arguably two viewpoints too many, and the book's plodding first act holds you back from the often exhilarating setpieces that follow as story threads intertwine. **Dean Evans**

**?** Turner has written a story that precedes the book: "There's A Devil Watching Over You" will be published on Tor.com.

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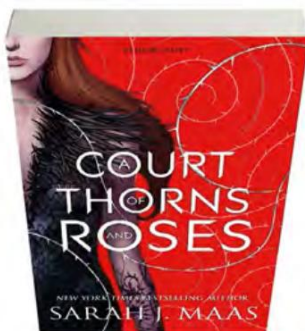


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## A Court of Thorns and Roses

A beastly romance

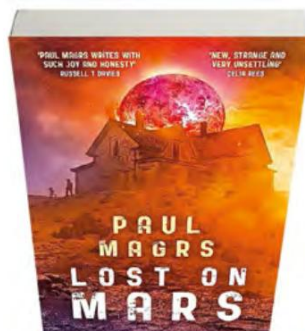


**Release Date:** 7 May  
420 pages | Paperback/ebook  
Author: Sarah J Maas  
Publisher: Bloomsbury

**BEAUTIFULLY WRITTEN,** and a touching romance, there's only one problem with *A Court of Thorns and Roses*: it's a combination of *Beauty and The Beast* with fairy-abduction tale *Tam Lin*. We all know the former story; anyone with the vaguest interests in fairy stories will know the latter.

And so, as engaging a heroine as Feyre is, and how swoon-worthy a heartthrob her shapeshifting High Fae captor Tamlin is, there are no surprises in the tale. Sarah Maas creates a suitably dreamlike vision of the faerie kingdoms and a marvellously villainous faerie queen living under a mountain, but what you never feel is tension, as you know that a happy ending is guaranteed. **Miriam McDonald**

**?** Maas was inspired by a song from *Princess Mononoke*. She listened and imagined a huntress taking down a giant wolf.



## Lost On Mars

Is there life on Mars? (Yep)



**Release Date:** 14 May  
352 pages | Paperback  
Author: Paul Magrs  
Publisher: Firefly Press

**THOSE INTREPID SOULS** who've signed up to establish a colony on Mars might think twice after reading this vivid tale of hardy frontier folk struggling to survive on the inhospitable prairies of the Red Planet.

Regular *Doctor Who* novelist Paul Magrs has been guilty of overdoing the whimsy in the past. Here, he dials that right down in favour of a convincing exercise in world-building – albeit one with a walking, talking sunbed and the occasional line like, “It was late in our Martian autumn when we were allowed to hold the funeral for Grandma’s leg.”

After a gritty start, the book – aimed at teens, but with obvious crossover appeal – shifts gear into quest territory before opening out into something far more wondrous, strange and satisfying. **Paul Kirkley**

**?** Magrs announced he'd become a novelist aged nine, as an “act of rebellion” – his dad “thought fiction was effeminate”.



## Summoner: The Novice

Overfamiliaramus!



**Release Date:** 5 May  
390 pages | Hardback/ebook  
Author: Taran Matharu  
Publisher: Hodder Children's Books

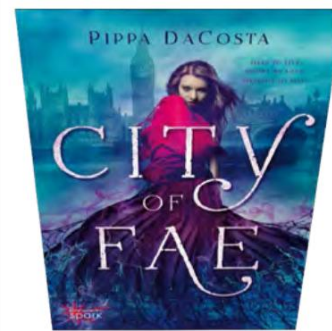
**HARRY POTTER MEETS Warhammer.** You don't need to know any more. Really – you don't.

Well, if you insist. This is a YA novel of such monumental unoriginality it's no surprise it turns out to be a self-published sensation snapped up by a risk-averse publisher.

A commoner lad who's an embryonic “Summoner” is enrolled in a military academy. He rubs shoulders with dwarves, elves and – worst of all – posh people. And they all have familiars... sorry, daemons... sorry, demons. Sorry... what franchise are we in?

Having said all that, Taran Matharu has a cheerily page-turning style, and the book is fast-paced, action-packed and competently written. Pity it's not more original. **Dave Golder**

**?** Taran Matharu once saved his sister from a rampaging hippopotamus in Kenya by picking her up and climbing up a wall.



## City Of Fae

Here come the beautiful ones



**Release Date:** 7 May  
336 pages | Ebook  
Author: Pippa DaCosta  
Publisher: Bloomsbury Spark

**IT'S DISPIRITING TO** think that a traditional “paranormal romance” cliché – “I must resist the allure of this beautiful yet dangerous man” – may be the high point that the rest of a novel struggles to live up to, but that's the case here. A twist halfway through the book changes everything you thought was going to happen, and soon you're looking nostalgically back on the yearning phase as a better, simpler time.

Alina is an ex-reporter looking for a story; in rock star fae Sovereign she may have found it. As Alina struggles to follow the “no-touching” rules for fae, she learns there's more to the beautiful creatures than humans know.

Starting out so-so and heading downhill as the story gets ever more outrageous, this feels like bad fanfic for a TV series you never wanted to watch. **Rhian Drinkwater**

**?** Inspiration for *City Of Fae* struck Pippi De Costa on a tube journey, “in that nowhere space between stops.”

## REISSUES

### BETE



**Release Date:** 14 May  
Author: Adam Roberts  
Publisher: Gollancz



Talking cows and a surly former farmer feature in Adam Roberts's darkly comic satire about man's relationship with nature, in which animal rights activists have injected domestic animals with artificial intelligence chips in a bid to win them greater rights. We said: “Roberts happily punches difficult thoughts through the reader's skull like bolts from a stun gun... it's obvious he is having fun.”

### EXTINCTION GAME



**Release Date:** 7 May  
Author: Gary Gibson  
Publisher: Tor



In this tale of alternate worlds (the first in a series), a guy is rescued from his Earth, where humanity's been decimated by a virus, then tasked by a mysterious agency, “the Authority”, with exploring other post-apocalyptic Earths. We said: “The apocalypse scenarios are reasonably colourful, but the plot is mundane... Still, there's a great central idea to flesh out in the sequels.”

### THE INCORRUPTIBLES



**Release Date:** 14 May  
Author: John Hornor Jacobs  
Publisher: Gollancz



In this Western/fantasy mashup, Imperial senators rule over the untamed territories of the Wild West, their steamboats powered by hellish rites and their hunting parties harassed by elf scalpers. We said: “Delivers a hearty scoop of Abercrombie-style grimdarkness, although layered with more magic and religion. The prose is extraordinarily rich... A rare thing: a clever story and an action-packed one.”



### THIEF'S MAGIC



**Release Date:** 7 May  
Author: Trudi Canavan  
Publisher: Orbit



This first in the *Millennium's Rule* series has two story strands which never connect: one concerns an archaeology student who discovers a mind-reading, sentient book; the other a magically gifted young woman in a society where magic's taboo. We said: “Canavan sticks with everyday people rather than princes and princesses. Add some delightful world-building and the result is a vivid and enjoyable experience.”



## BOOK CLUB 114

# Lords And Ladies

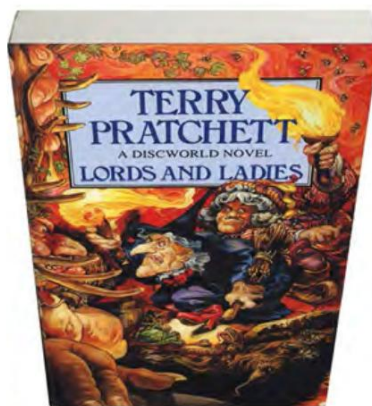
## Terry Pratchett, 1992

Jen Williams discusses one of her favourite novels by the late author

**H**OW CAN YOU CHOOSE A *Discworld* novel to write about, when the series is littered with classics? *Mort*, *Small Gods*, *Guards! Guards!*, *Night Watch*... You could pick a title out of a hat and be blessed with a great work of fantastical fiction. *Lords And Ladies* is a tremendous example of an early *Discworld* book and, quite selfishly, it is my favourite.

It's the fourteenth *Discworld* novel, and the fourth concerning that fractious coven of Lancre witches made up of Granny Weatherwax, Nanny Ogg and Magrat Garlick. In this adventure, the Elves are coming to Lancre; they're achingly beautiful, mindlessly cruel, and they want nothing more than to make us afraid of the dark again. Granny Weatherwax and Nanny Ogg are going to be hard pressed to sort this one out, especially when there's a royal wedding looming, a gaggle of new witches causing trouble by the standing stones, and the ever present threat of the "Stick and Bucket Dance"...

*Lords And Ladies* has so many of the things that make the *Discworld* novels special. It has an inhuman threat that highlights the humanity of our heroes: the easy grace and cold indifference of the Elf Queen, in comparison to our doubtful, frustrated Magrat, who is only just finding out what being a Queen means when all at once she has to fight for the position, or the sleek, faceless elf hunters in comparison to our own Shawn Ogg, who is learning his kung fu out of a book. It has the friendships and relationships that you understand within a few lines of text and recognise because they are true: the deep trust and slightly knowing tolerance of the friendship between Granny and Nanny Ogg, the awkward romance between the shy Magrat and Verence. And it has humour of course, buckets and buckets of humour. Humour in fantasy books is extraordinarily hard to pull off, but Sir Terry peppers the page with jokes like it's the easiest thing in the world, even while he's slipping an icy piece of truth down the back of your jumper.



### Hidden amongst the witches and elves is so much truth

That truth is most apparent in the internal lives of his characters. Here we see more of Granny Weatherwax than we ever have done. This pragmatic, independent, fiercely capable woman is doubting herself for the first time as the spectre of her death looms closer. Complicating things further is the presence of Mustrum Ridcully, her partner in a youthful romance that never quite led anywhere. The relationship between them too – the sweet, slightly desperate attempts from Ridcully to reignite their passions and the flat avoidance of any such nonsense from Granny Weatherwax – reveals so much about the two characters that it's almost painful to read, mainly because in her refusal Granny is actually being kind

(or at least her version of it). There are other worlds where they did marry, where they did have children, she tells him. And that is enough. *Discworld* books are often described somewhat dismissively as humorous fantasy, but I have rarely read a sentiment truer or more heart-breaking than Granny's practical acceptance that her choices are ultimately her own.

Granny isn't the only character to have new layers revealed. Soon to be queen, Magrat is struggling with this change in her status. People she's known all her life are speaking to her like she's a stranger, and even worse, being a queen is *boring*. Frustrated, betrayed, and frightened, she stumbles across the armour of Queen Ynci, a woman more concerned with steel spikes than tapestries. Pushed into a corner, with everything she loves at stake, the iron core at the heart of Magrat shows itself. Magrat's sudden bad ass\* transformation is wonderful not because she's fearless – she's actually terrified – but because the Queen of the Elves mistakes her for someone who can be overlooked because she is kind, and that turns out to be a huge mistake.

It's impossible to summarise here exactly how much Sir Terry Pratchett meant to me, or to fantasy and literature in general. Hidden amongst the witches and the elves, the trolls and the dwarves, there is so much truth about humanity that in reading these books, you cannot help but know yourself a little better.

\* Bad ass as in "formidable", not as in that small village in the Ramtops\*\*

\*\* What? I can't have a footnote in an article about a *Discworld* novel?

Jen Williams's latest book, *The Iron Ghost*, is out now.

### LIKE THIS? TRY THESE!

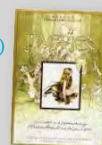
**Carpe Jugulum**  
(Terry Pratchett, 1998)

This time the threat to Lancre comes from a power-hungry family of forward-thinking vampires, led by the villainous Count Magpyr.



**Faeries**  
(Brian Froud, Alan Lee, 1979)

Not a novel, but the resource if you need to know your boggart from your brownie. You'll know the authors' design work from *Labyrinth* and *The Lord Of The Rings* respectively.



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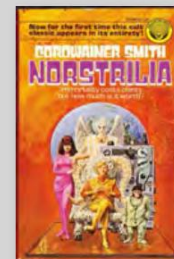
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## NEXT ISSUE

Award-winning *Osama and A Man Lies Dreaming* author Lavie Tidhar casts an eye over Cordwainer Smith's space opera *Norstrilia*.



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AN EXTRACT FROM A NEW BOOK

# The Machine Awakes

by Adam Christopher

**Acclaimed author Adam Christopher returns to the Spider War universe of *The Burning Dark* in this gripping far-future space opera.**



## THE AUTHOR

Adam Christopher is a novelist and comic writer. In 2010, as an editor, Christopher won a Sir Julius Vogel award, New Zealand's highest science fiction honour. His debut novel, *Empire State*, was a *Financial Times* Book of the Year for 2012. In 2013, he was nominated for the Sir Julius Vogel award for Best New Talent, with *Empire State* shortlisted for Best Novel. Born in New Zealand, he has lived in Great Britain since 2006. Visit his website at [www.adamchristopher.co.uk](http://www.adamchristopher.co.uk), or follow him on Twitter @ghostfinder.

**As humanity remains trapped in a losing battle against a mechanical race capable of tearing apart entire planets, trainee psi-marine Caitlin Smith is on the run from the Fleet Academy with a mission of her own...**

Caitlin screamed and sat up, kicking at the damp sheets tangling around her feet, her drenched T-shirt slick against her skin. For a moment she could see nothing but golden light flaring and hear nothing but the roar of the ocean. But as she opened her eyes and blinked and blinked she realized the glow was morning light reflecting off the gold mirrored glass of the building opposite her own, the shard of light shining through the unfinished wall of her refuge and spotlighting her as she sat on her makeshift bed. The roaring wasn't in her head, either. It was coming through the ceiling, the endless screech and thud of music so heavy it sounded more like an unbalanced shuttle afterburner.

She kicked the sheets clear, then leaned back and reached under her pillow. It was the only place you could keep valuables, and her most prized possession was still in place. Likewise her watch, which never left her wrist, not in a place like this. She rubbed her face and glanced at it.

Five a.m.

Time to move. She swung her legs over the edge of the bed, then paused.

She'd had the dream, again. As vivid as a memory, a flashback from battle, as if it had been her on Warworld 4114, crouching in the trench, facing down the marching Spider

army with her mind as her weapon.

But it hadn't been her. She had never served the Fleet – never gotten that far. The memory belonged to someone else.

Her brother, Tyler.

Cait sniffed the air. It was warm already, although the breeze blowing in through the open wall of her twelfth-floor hideout was starting to make her shiver in her sweat-soaked underwear. Getting undressed to go to sleep was a risk – a place like this, you had to be ready to move, quickly – but it had been so fucking hot the last few nights, she'd decided to take the chance. Not that she'd been able to sleep much. The dream had disturbed her rest for most of the past two weeks.

With the music still thundering from elsewhere in the half-finished building, Cait quickly hopped across the floor, the concrete cool on her bare feet as she crouched down near the plastic crate where she had stashed her gear. That was another risk. She really should have kept the crate within arm's reach of the bed. She chastised herself for being sloppy, but that was the last night she'd have to spend in this dump anyway.

For two weeks she'd been living – if you could call it that – high in an abandoned, unfinished skyscraper on the edge of Salt City. Despite the slum's overcrowding, the skeletal building was only half-occupied by squatters – perhaps, Cait had thought, it was the proximity of the building to the shiny clean world of New Orem, literally just across the street, that put people off. The construction – half-finished fingers of building poking into the sky like the rotting ribs of a forgotten animal carcass – had been halted who knew how many years ago, a symbol of the Fleet's complete indifference to the plight of the giant slum right on its doorstep. Maybe that was another reason she'd found a hideout so easily. The people of Salt City didn't want any reminders of how the Fleet had failed them. The construction site, and the shell of the building in which Cait had made her camp, was just that.

That didn't stop scavengers, of course. As Cait got dressed, she padded over to the open wall and looked down at the



rubble-strewn ground far below. The body of the last one she'd fought off was still down there, lying in a particularly inaccessible half-finished foundation pile. She hadn't intended to kill him, but she hadn't been able to stop herself. Backed into a corner, fighting not just for her life but for the *mission*, and... it had happened again. Her wild talent had come to the fore, acting almost like it had its own intelligence, taking over to protect her when she couldn't do it herself.

The scavenger had screamed all the way to the ground.

And he was still there. And she really *hadn't* meant to kill him – her talent, her *power* impossible to control, no matter how hard she tried. But since then, nobody else had come to bother her. She guessed his corpse – his screams – had served as a warning. Stay away from the woman on level twelve, north side. She's a crazy bitch.

Cait pushed the memory away, focusing on the here and now, controlling her breathing as she felt her heart rate pick up.

Because her talent was a frightening thing. And not just for scavengers or the trainers at the Academy who had seen something different about her, out of all the thousands of recruits who enrolled.

She was scared of it too.

She blew out her cheeks to calm herself, and she sat on her bed and pulled her boots on. Her outfit wasn't black as instructed, but it was comprised of the darkest things she still owned. The pants and boots *were* black, but the hoodie was dark navy blue, and the T-shirt underneath was light gray – there was nothing she could do there except keep the hoodie zipped to the neck. She stood and pulled a hair tie from her pocket, scraping her still-damp bangs off her face as she looked out to the spires of the Fleet capital, New Orem, glowing in the sunrise. It was a beautiful sight, despite the ruined surrounds.

The morning sky was clear, and when the chill breeze dropped Cait could feel the real heat beginning to grow, the sunlight already reflecting off thousands of immaculate mirrored buildings opposite her own incomplete shell of one.

Today it was time to head back into the city, because today was her brother's funeral.

It would be a military service with full honors, to be held at the Fleet Memorial, a vast cemetery on the other side of the city. Cait had worked out a route, had run it a few times to make sure it was okay. It would take three hours to get into position, as instructed. The service was due to start at one in the afternoon. She had plenty of time, but she knew she needed to get in and set up before it got too difficult.

Cait turned from the open wall and lifted her pillow. Beneath it was a slim black backpack. As she picked it up, something hard clanked inside. She unzipped the top, made sure the objects inside were secure, and slipped it on.

She closed her eyes. Took a deep breath.

*I'm ready*, she thought.

The breeze picked up, pulling at her hair.

*I'll see you soon*, sis, said the voice of Tyler Smith inside her head, as real as her own thoughts.

Cait opened her eyes and smiled. She reached down into the plastic crate and took out a small canister of liquid. She flipped the cap, poured it over her bedding, and then walked backwards, splashing the liquid around as much as possible before tossing the container back into the crate. She took two steps down the open stairwell at the back of the room, then pulled a disposable lighter from her pocket. She flicked the flame and watched it

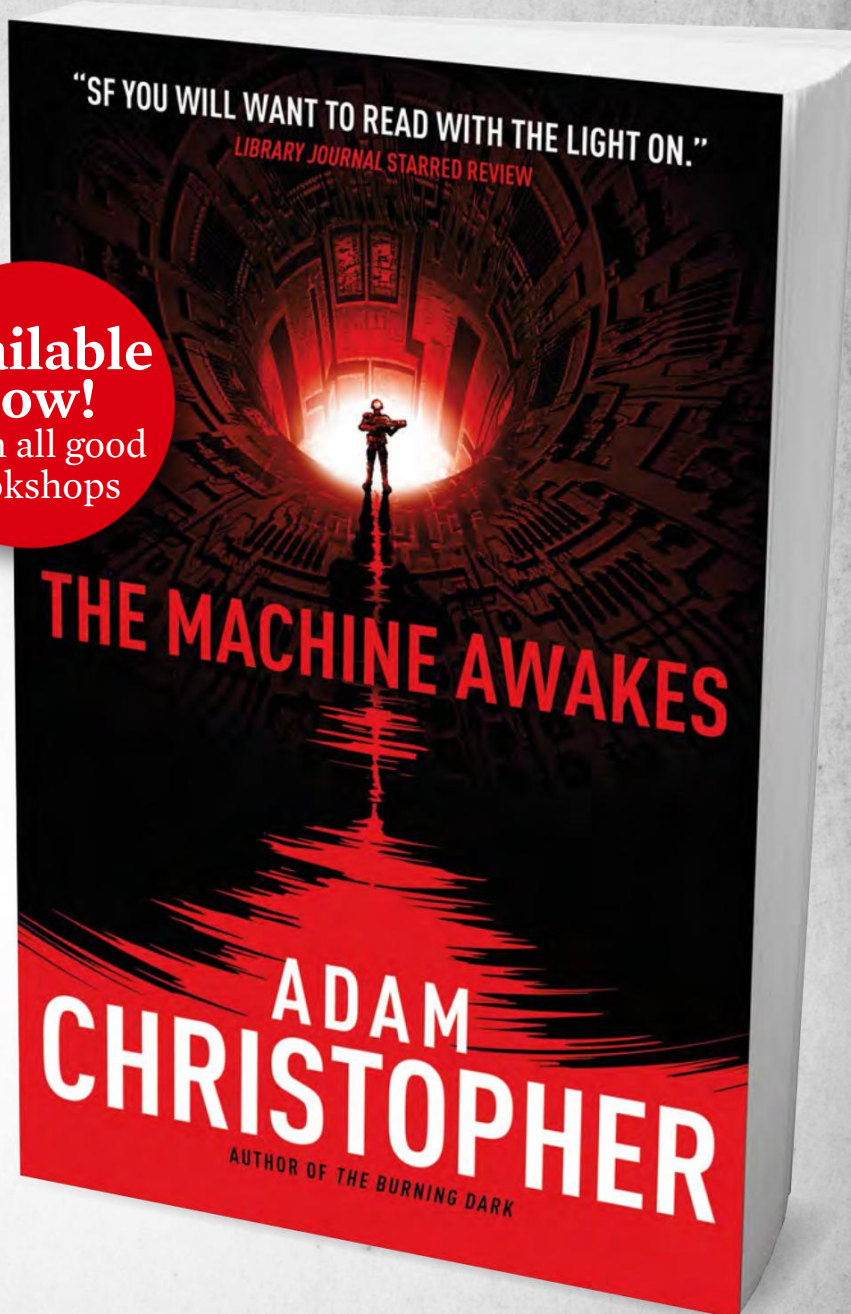
for a moment, then threw the lighter. Immediately, her former accommodation was engulfed with thin, pale flames.

Caitlin Smith turned on her heel and jogged down the stairs.

She had a funeral to interrupt.

**To find out what happens next, pick up *The Machine Awakes*, out now from Titan Books (RRP £7.99). E-book also available. [www.titanbooks.com](http://www.titanbooks.com)**

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OVERVIEW

## Spider-Gwen

Does whatever a Spider-Man can



Release Date: **OUT NOW!**

Publisher: Marvel Comics  
Writer: Jason Latour  
Artist: Robbi Rodriguez



### WE'RE

experiencing a pretty progressive period in the comics industry. There are more solo female books in production than ever before. Significantly for a business that has traditionally led teenage boys by the hormones, character designs for this new wave of women warriors don't break the rules of biology just so they can spill out of impractical outfits.

And character design is an important element of Spider-Gwen's journey to her own solo book, which, even in the context of a business that's suddenly realised women's money is as good as men's, is fairly revolutionary.

There's no getting away from it, Spider-Gwen has an incredible costume. Initially intended as merely a supporting character in Marvel's cast-of-thousands Spider-Man event *Edge Of Spider-Verse*, Gwen Stacy's punk rock backstory and beautifully designed threads struck a power-chord with fans, who immediately started creating fan art and cosplay outfits to expand their

new icon's presence, bringing her out of her parallel universe and into our real world. Spider-Gwen's image spread across the internet like the radioactive poison of a super-spider through its host's body, and Marvel took note. They've retained the creative team for Gwen's solo adventures, and Robbi Rodriguez's gutsy art is a definite highlight of this series.

But it'd be a mistake to credit Gwen's popularity solely to her looks. In *Spider-Verse*, a complex crossover story following a villain's attempt to murder every parallel version of Spider-Man, told via a mixture of main-book tie-ins and solo-book miniseries, Jason Latour made Gwen's personality shine brighter than a Spider-Signal. That trend continues in *Spider-Gwen's* first few issues. Like Peter Parker before her, Stacy struggles with

balancing her identities – she's fallen out with the members of the all-girl punk rock group she drums for, she's clashing with her detective dad (the only person who knows she's a superhero) and, by her third issue, she's managed to line up more supervillains than a Sam Raimi threequel. We don't want to spoil a fairly brilliant reveal, but you'll

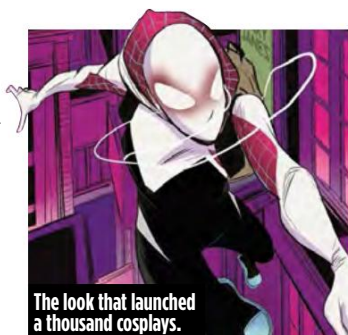
## She's a modern teenager with a feminist edge

recognise the name/look of one of Gwen's foes, though definitely not the behaviour...

This playful approach to characters we know and love is part of the fun of *Spider-Gwen*. Here, the Vulture is Walter White with wings, and Frank Castle is a police officer with a penchant for skull t-shirts. But, most significantly, Stacy herself fizzles with life.

Spider-Woman and Silk currently have their own web-spinning spun-off spider-books on shelves, but Spider-Gwen stands out with her own clear identity; she's a modern teenager with a feminist edge. And there's something incredibly joyous about Stacy, the most iconic example of the "fridging" trope (where male heroes are inspired by the death of women), being given new life via her own gleefully fun hero's journey.

**Sam Ashurst**



The look that launched a thousand cosplays.

Fans inspired this series; they also named it. Gwen was originally "Spider-Woman", but her fan-name stuck for her solo book.



GRAPHIC NOVEL

## Avengers: Rage Of Ultron

No, that's not a typo...



Release Date: **OUT NOW!**

Publisher: Marvel Comics  
Writer: Rick Remender  
Artist: Jerome Opeña



**AS KURT BUSIEK** notes in his intro, Ultron has always been in the top two of Earth's Mightiest Heroes' most

memorable archenemies. With his familial connections through his father and creator, Hank Pym, and so-called son, the Vision, there's always been something personal about the metallic megalomaniac's rivalry with the Avengers.

Those – ahem – blood ties are at the heart of this graphic novel, with the Wasp also playing a crucial role. Beginning in the past before moving to the present, Rick Remender's script isn't as convoluted as much of his regular Marvel output. And with Sam Wilson replacing Steve Rogers as Cap and the mysterious female Thor taking the place of her male counterpart, Remender strikes an intriguing contrast between the classic "Avengers Then" and the more diverse "Avengers Now".

After forging a device that "turns off" all AIs, Pym's morality is questioned, leading to a debate about what exactly constitutes life. Resembling a more kinetic Jae Lee, Jerome Opeña's art – assisted by Pepe Larraz and Mark Morales – just about justifies the price, with the superior paper stock enhancing the lavish detail and vibrant colours. With a devastating ending that has significant implications going forward, *Rage Of Ultron* is recommended reading for all True Believers. **Stephen Jewell**

Ultron has had two android "wives": Jocasta and Alkhema, with personalities inspired by the Wasp and Mockingbird.



## OVERVIEW

## Nameless

## Cosmic Thing

Release Date: **OUT NOW!**

Publisher: Image Comics

Writer: Grant Morrison

Artist: Chris Burnham

**HE'S RESPONSIBLE**

for some of the weirdest mainstream comics ever, so when Grant Morrison writes a horror story, it's wise to brace yourself. *Nameless* doesn't mess around when it comes to violence and gore, but it's in the combined approaches of Morrison and artistic collaborator Chris Burnham that this six-issue miniseries finds its bizarre and disturbing voice.

The story follows a foul-mouthed occult dream-thief known only as Nameless, who's hired by a billionaire to embark on a surreal mission to save the world. A gigantic asteroid is about to collide with Earth and a team of scientists are out

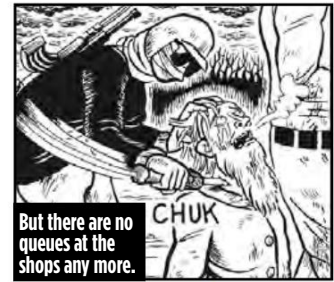
to stop it with the help of ritual magic – but when they discover what's waiting inside the asteroid, it soon becomes clear that humanity is about to encounter something god-like and terrifying...

Morrison's script throws together a host of influences into a typically dense story which, three issues in, is only just starting to reveal its secrets. Characterisation is a little thin, but the story's ambition is impressive, while the brooding atmosphere of cosmic, unknowable horror owes just as much to Chris Burnham's clammy, imaginative artwork.

The comic's visuals show the same kind of creative layouts and inventive energy previously seen in Burnham's work on *Batman: Incorporated*, blended with moments of ferocious horror that aren't easily unseen. *Nameless* isn't yet top-grade Morrisonian madness, but it's still a blisteringly dark and well-crafted nightmare that already looks to be heading towards a seriously mind-bending climax.

**Saxon Bullock**

**?** Officer Downe, the graphic novel illustrated by Burnham, is currently being made into a movie by Shawn Crahan from Slipknot.



## GRAPHIC NOVEL

## Black River

The depths of despair

Release Date: **2 May**

Publisher: Fantagraphics

Writer/artist: Josh Simmons

**AN END-OF**

-the-world tale for those who thought Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* was a bit too light and cheery,

this new graphic novel from writer/artist Josh Simmons is not for the timid or the weak of stomach. An extremely adult and uncompromisingly bleak story, *Black River* takes us on a journey into a post-apocalyptic nightmare.

Following a succession of natural disasters that have devastated the planet, a small group of travellers are foraging for supplies across the wastes of America. One of them has heard rumours of a city that supposedly still has power and some semblance of normality, but their attempt to reach it soon pulls them into a continuing cycle of abuse and horrific violence.

Rendered in a rough, jagged art style that captures a desolate world but still finds moments of weird beauty, *Black River* is a difficult read, but worthy of investigation for fans of the more literary end of the market. Simmons's approach is powerful but it's also unrelentingly grim.

From a visit to a dilapidated bar to a run-in with a gang of rapists, the story features the usual tropes of apocalypse fiction but concentrates almost exclusively on the darkest and most brutal material. It's an explicit and challenging work, but the extreme violence and general atmosphere of grotesque savagery mean it's ultimately easier to admire *Black River* than to like it.

**Saxon Bullock**

**?** Simmons used to be part of a "punk rock sex circus", which climaxed with someone performing auto-fellatio on a bed of nails.

## OVERVIEW

## Star Trek/Planet Of The Apes

## They finally really did it

Release Date: **OUT NOW!**

Publisher: IDW Publishing/Boom! Studios

Writer: Scott and David Tipton

Artist: Rachael Stott

**AFTER PREVIOUSLY**

teaming up *The Next Generation* with *Doctor Who*, IDW's latest *Star Trek* crossover is a bit more down to Earth – albeit the post-apocalyptic realm of *Planet Of The Apes*.

Taking its cue from the original 1968 *Apes* film, five-part series *The Primate Directive* sees the USS Enterprise following a Klingon warship through an interdimensional portal to what initially appears to be a less advanced version of their own home world. With the Klingons planning to use it as a launchpad to conquer the rest of this parallel universe, Captain Kirk and crew

are soon embroiled in a civil war between the various ape species.

However, co-writers David and Scott Tipton confine the Klingons to a backseat for much of the second and third issues, as Kirk locks horns with a headstrong Colonel George Taylor, who charges around in a Tarzan-esque loincloth. It's unfortunate that Taylor's primitive companion Nova is such a peripheral presence – her mute status doesn't help – meaning that surely only those familiar with the *Apes* canon will recognise her.

With Taylor urging Kirk to utilise the Enterprise's technological might against gorilla general Marius, there's much soul-searching about whether the Prime Directive applies in an alternate reality. Impressively melding the mythoses of these two iconic '60s series together, the script is brought to life by British newcomer Rachael Stott, who combines a knack for likenesses with some dynamic storytelling. It makes for a compelling gateway to both properties. **Stephen Jewell**

**?** IDW's next *Trek* crossover will mesh the current movie crew with Hal Jordan's Green Lantern: *The Spectrum War* begins in July.





# Bloodborne

Miyazaki masterwork



Release Date: OUT NOW!

Platform: PS4

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment



## YES, HIDETAKA

Miyazaki's debut PS4 hack 'n' slasher is hard. No, it's not quite as good as *Dark Souls*. But get ready to hurt and be joyously chuffed about it.

From Software's legacy shows through: the tightly choreographed quasi-open-world exploration of *Dark Souls* is welded together by the interconnected hub world system seen in *Demon's Souls*. It's a hugely successful structural mish-mash, and one that offers unparalleled player agency when it comes to dealing with the utterly exacting, wonderfully poised third-person combat model.

This is the most overtly horror-flavoured game From has ever designed. The city drips with dread;

its cobbled, gothic streets smother you as cramped environments and baying mobs look to end your mysterious Hunter's life. The combat is just about the most thoughtfully constructed, constantly exhilarating fighting system we've ever played, certainly on PS4. Learning its intricacies is terrifying. Be very afraid. "Shields are nice, but not if they engender

passivity," snarls one item description, mocking you for even entertaining the idea of using a piece of equipment that was once beyond vital to skirmishes in From's previous games.

*Bloodborne* erects the pillars of its combat upon scintillating, unyielding aggression. Where in *Dark Souls* you would rhythmically block and parry, here the game is won and lost by how effectively your Hunter can dart and dash around their enemies. Striking back after being hit is also key – the Regain system means you can now win back a chunk of lost HP should



And this is why you shouldn't walk home alone after dark.

# Another brutal, brilliant hack 'n' slash package

you land an attack within the first second or so of being wailed on.

Sadly, on a tech front, some failings hobble the game's grab for top score. The camera can be a nightmare during boss fights – an outcome of slapping massive foes into cramped arenas. More problematic is the framerate; *Bloodborne* doesn't quite hit a steady 30fps, which makes panning the camera an occasional juddering annoyance.

We still love *Bloodborne*, though. The combat is peerless, the world captivating and the sense of deadly exploration never more compelling. Miyazaki and From Software have delivered another brutal, brilliant hack 'n' slash package, the PS4's first essential, bespoke current-gen exclusive. Buy it. Love it. Fear it.

Dave Meikleham

When using the visceral attack backstab on larger enemies, the clipping means your hand disappears somewhere... unpleasant.

# Game Of Thrones Episodes Two And Three

Forrester management

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Format reviewed: PS4

Also available on: PS3, Xbox One, Xbox 360, PC, iOS

Publisher: Telltale Games



## THE LATEST

episodes in Telltale's six-part *Game Of Thrones* graphic adventure continue the tradition of a

family from the North finding themselves relentlessly shat on in Westeros. If you thought the Starks had it bad, wait till you see what's in store for the Forresteres.

Episode Two, "The Lost Lords" (★★★★★) establishes a new world order for the beleaguered family and introduces remaining players Asher and Rodrik. Asher is a particularly welcome addition, injecting a much-needed sense of fun into the endlessly miserable events elsewhere. But it's a peculiarly uneventful 90 minutes that's almost entirely lacking the moments of agonising diplomacy Telltale is best known for.



We bet those feathers itch after a while.

Fortunately things pick up with "The Sword In The Darkness" (★★★★★), as the series' disjointed narrative finally finds place. The remaining Forresteres may be scattered, but each one is fighting for the survival of their family, and every failure puts added emphasis on the next character to pick up the slack. It's masterfully paced, compellingly written and features one of Telltale's best setpieces to date: a deadly dragon attack!

There's still a sense that the Forresteres' story is more of a footnote than an actual chapter in the history of the Ice and Fire, but at the halfway mark this is shaping up to be a solid slice of storytelling from the fringes of Westeros.

Jordan Farley

Telltale recently announced a partnership with Lionsgate to make TV/videogame hybrid "Super Shows".

# Pillars Of Eternity

Standing tall forever



Release Date: OUT NOW!

Platform: PC

Publisher: Paradox Interactive



## PILLARS OF

*Eternity* is developer Obsidian's love letter to classic RPGs like *Baldur's Gate*, but while it could easily

have been little more than a cynical nostalgia trip, it stands tall on its own. It's the most captivating, rewarding RPG on the PC in years.

*Pillars* really makes you feel like you're on an adventure. Plunging the depths of ancient ruins, battling the monstrous creatures who lurk there, grabbing the loot, then limping back to the warm glow of an inn's hearth to rest and steel yourself for the next quest. It's a testament to the quality of the art, atmosphere, and writing that, despite the old school 2D visuals and isometric perspective, it completely transports you to its world.

And it's big. Like, really big. It took us 11 hours to reach Defiance



Bay, the first of the game's two capital cities, and another 30 hours before the second city, Twin Elms, with dozens of towns, temples, ruins, and wilderness sections to explore on the way. This is a big, fat, deep adventure that lets you carve your own unique path through a fantasy world that's been brilliantly brought to life with rich, evocative writing. It's a game steeped in a bygone era of computer RPG design, but somehow it doesn't feel archaic. Obsidian has always been bound to other peoples' worlds – *Fallout*, *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Star Wars*, *South Park* – but in creating its own from scratch, the company has made not only their best game to date, but one of the best RPGs on PC. Andy Kelly

*Pillars* is a crowdfunding success story – it was created with the financial help of 77,000 Kickstarter backers.





AUDIO ADVENTURES

# Doctor Who

Traditional companions, unfamiliar Doctors

## The Defectors

★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!  
115 minutes | CD/download  
Publisher: Big Finish

## Death Match

★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!  
75 minutes | CD/download  
Publisher: Big Finish

## Short Trips: The Ghost Trap

★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!  
35 minutes | Download only  
Publisher: Big Finish

### WE'RE FAST APPROACHING

Big Finish's 200th regular monthly *Doctor Who* release, and they're celebrating with an audio trilogy that gives us some unusual Doctor/companion line-ups. Each story will, intriguingly, pair companions from the show's early years with different future Doctors.

The action begins with *The Defectors*, as UNIT HQ is unexpectedly evacuated and Jo Grant (Katy Manning) is involved in a sinister excursion to an army base on a deserted island. On top of that, the Third Doctor has vanished, to be replaced by an enigmatic stranger who's actually the Seventh Doctor (Sylvester McCoy). The reason for this substitution remains a mystery for now, but the resulting action delivers a series of well-handled concepts and twist alongside strong performances. *The Defectors* is an entertaining adventure, but it's most effective in the way it blends the action and military intrigue of the Pertwee era with the darker, more ambiguous edge of McCoy's Doctor.

Elsewhere, the Tom Baker-starring Fourth Doctor adventures continue in *Death Match*, which picks up from the cliffhanger ending of *Requiem For The Rocket Men*. With Leela (Louise Jameson) having been abducted by the Master, the Doctor and K-9 set out to find her, but their quest leads them to a brutal kill-or-be-killed gladiatorial contest being fought on a distant space station – a contest where Leela is now the undefeated

champion... After the previous adventure's pulpy excellence, this is a more familiar tale of SF combat which

occasionally overplays its sequences of armed combatants shouting at each other. The story is so inherently visual and action-based that it sometimes feels like an awkward fit for audio, while many of the plot developments are a little too predictable. However, while genuine surprises are in short supply, there's still a touchingly emotional finale, and excellent work from the lead actors – especially Baker, who's once again on top form.

The Fourth Doctor/Leela team is also the focus of the latest download-only *Short Trips* short story, narrated by Louise Jameson. *The Ghost Trap* sees the duo arriving on a semi-organic spacecraft, where they discover that humanity's quest to master the realm of Hyperspace has had deadly consequences. The story features some strong SF concepts and builds an effectively creepy atmosphere that's aided by Jameson's excellent narration. Unfortunately, it also ends up overdoing the darker themes, and ultimately pitches so far into grimness that it becomes a rather depressing and unsatisfying listen. **Saxon Bullock**

**?** Out on 21 May: readings of Mark Gatiss Third Doctor novel *The Last Of The Gadarene*, and Tom Baker classic "City Of Death".

To occupy you till  
18 December?



BOARDGAME

## Star Wars: Armada

Lock S-foils, we're going in...

★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!  
Two players | £90  
Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games

### IN THIS TABLETOP

strategy game, two opposing players take charge of the battle fleets of the Empire and Rebel Alliance. One controls a Star Destroyer and six squadrons of TIE Fighters, while the other has a Corvette, Frigate and four squadrons of X-Wings.

Players are free to roam anywhere on a three-foot-square surface, with rules governing firing range and turning speed, but things still get cluttered, with multiple ships plus devices for measuring combat and manoeuvring. Attacks are managed using dice rolls to apportion damage, critical hits and their effects.

*Armada* does have some incongruities, such as fighters not being able to move and attack, contrary to *Star Wars* dogfights. Also, the weakness of the TIE Fighters means you'll need to stick to the same overall strategy, attacking in swarms to knock out the X-Wings before they pick you off first.

No doubt it will appeal to strategy purists, and there's fun to be had steering your lumbering warships around, trying to outwit your opponent while managing your dwindling shields. But if you want to recapture the twists and turns of dynamic space combat, this isn't the game you're looking for.

There's also the niggling feeling that the core pack is just a gateway drug for the "fleet building" expansion packs. With additional ships costing between £15 and £30, this could rapidly become a very expensive hobby. **Steve Jarratt**

**?** Twelve expansion packs are due, including Admiral Ackbar's cruiser and tiny versions of Slave I and the Millennium Falcon.



# Box Of Delights

What we've been playing with this month

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01621 877 222



## 1 Ultimate Freddy Figure

NECA/Reel Toys | Height: 18cm | RRP: £22.99 | FPI price: £16.99 | Catalogue number: B8812

Ever bemoaned the lack of 7" knife-fingered sleep botherers in your life? Then you're in luck, because Freddy Krueger figures don't come much better than this 30th Anniversary edition. It comes with three interchangeable heads, a dead skin mask, Nancy's gross tongue phone, an interchangeable hand with severed fingers and a removable fedora. Better yet, it's impressively detailed and articulated – the stuff nightmares are made of.

## 2 Firefly Pop! Vinyl Figures

Funko | Height: 10-10.5cm | RRP: £9.99 | FPI price: £8.99 | Catalogue numbers: B8727, B8737

Here's one of SF's most beloved married couples rendered in super-stylised form – Mr and Mrs Washburne, to be precise. The detail is what really appeals here: you've got to love the fact that Wash (or Hoban, if we're going to be formal) is clutching one of his toy dinosaurs. Not convinced Zoe's eyelashes should look quite that luxuriant though; it doesn't seem appropriately tough, somehow. Also available: Mal, Kaylee, and a woolly-hatted Jayne.

## 3 Walking Dead Action Figures

McFarlane Toys | Height: 12.5-13.5cm | RRP: £16.99 each | FPI price: £14.99 each | Catalogue numbers: B8901, B8904, B8905, B8906, B8907

Usually you know what you're getting with *Walking Dead* figures – reasonably accurate representations of the characters from the hit zombie show – and these portrayals of Rick, Hershel, the Governor and Abraham do not disappoint. Hershel even comes with an optional prosthetic leg. The real talking point here, though, is the "Bungee Guts Zombie". His special feature? Detachable intestines that form a handy lasso. We have no idea why...



FUNKO PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

## 4 Fabrikations Greedo

Funko | Height: 16cm | RRP: £19.99 | FPI price: £16.99 | Catalogue number: B9882

This Fabrikation version of the galaxy's most inept bounty hunter has a good excuse for not shooting first. While having his blaster literally *sewn* into his hand initially seems wise, the manufacturers have made a continuity error and put it in Greedo's left hand rather than the right he uses in the movie. What chance did he have? That said, laser guns are probably the least of his worries - with a noggin that oversized, he presumably struggles to get through the Cantina doors in the first place.



4

PUBLIC CALL BOX

6

## 5 Batmobile Bottle Opener

Diamond Select | Length: 11cm | RRP: £16.99 | FPI price: £14.99 | Catalogue number: C2429

"Holy kitchen implement!"

"Yes, boy wonder! It appears to be a metal bottle opener cunningly disguised as our faithful Batmobile! The detailing is impressive!"

"Holy inebriation! Just imagine breaking open the Bat-beers with this beauty!"

"Caution, old chum. The folly of alcohol has led many a good citizen of Gotham astray."

"Holy sobriety, Batman! You're right! And to think... I was almost tempted!"



5

## 6 Doctor Who Tea Towels

BBC Worldwide | Length: 72cm | RRP: £17.99 | FPI price: £14.99 | Catalogue number: C3174

Have a kitchen? Like *Doctor Who*? Then YOU are the target market for this set of tea towels! (Providing you do actually use crockery *and* don't just rely on air-drying.) One has a TARDIS frontage on it, the other a Tellytubby new Paradigm Dalek in bright orange; they're 100% cotton and further proof that the Beeb will release literally anything *Who*-related. Perhaps they have other uses, though. Kids playing up? Make them a *Who* den with these as doors!



## THINGS TO COME

MORE GOODIES COMING YOUR WAY



EXPECT TO PAY  
£13

### SLIMER PIZZA CUTTER

ETA: SEPTEMBER

If Slimer is a ghost, what's he a ghost of, exactly? An alien? A Lovecraftian beast? A fat bloke who somehow lost most of his body and turned green? Anyhow, the *Ghostbusters* gannet is the last thing you want around when you're about to tuck into a pizza - it wouldn't last five seconds - but he does make an amusingly appropriate handle for this kitchen utensil.



EXPECT TO PAY  
£120

### BOBBLE-FIGURE SUPERMAN

ETA: SEPTEMBER

What the devil is a "bobble-figure"? Well, it's like a bobble-head, but the bit on a spring isn't a wobbly noggin. In this case, it's a car, being hoisted in the air by the Man of Steel in a recreation of the cover of *Action Comics* #1 (in which Supes made his debut). If this tickles you, there's also a Joker Bobble-figure based on an iconic panel from Alan Moore's *The Killing Joke*.



EXPECT TO PAY  
£15

### TWELFTH DOCTOR TALKING PLUSH

ETA: SEPTEMBER

Of all the Doctors, surely Peter Capaldi is the least appropriate for transformation into a cuddly toy? He's not exactly touchy-feely. Standing 9" high, this plush says one of three phrases when you squeeze it. Surely one of them should be, "I don't think that I'm a hugging person now?"





# VIEW SCREEN

TV REVIEWS  
AND OPINION



## What's On

What to watch  
when this month

LOOK OUT  
FOR SFX TV  
REVIEWS AT  
GAMESRADAR.  
COM

- **Mondays** - Get the week off to a bang with *Game Of Thrones* on Sky Atlantic. *Gotham* (until 11 May) and *Person Of Interest* are on Channel 5.
- **Tuesdays** - *Penny Dreadful's* second season comes to Sky Atlantic on 5 May. You can also catch *The Flash* on Sky 1, *Supernatural* on E4 and *The Originals* on Syfy.
- **Wednesdays** - New episodes of *Once Upon A Time* on Netflix, plus *The Vampire Diaries* on ITV2 and *Grimm* on Watch.
- **Thursdays** - *Wayward Pines* debuts on 14 May, plus *Arrow* on Sky 1, *Resurrection* on Watch, and *Sleepy Hollow* on Universal (until 14 May).
- **Fridays** - More japes with *Agents Of SHIELD* on Channel 4, plus time travel fun in *12 Monkeys* on Syfy.
- **Saturdays** - Get up early for *Thunderbirds Are Go* on ITV, or watch *Atlantis* on BBC One.
- **Sundays** - Freaky body art in *Tatau* on BBC Three, plus new *Outlander* on Amazon Prime.



BROADCAST UK: FINISHED AIRING ON FOX US: FINISHED AIRING ON AMC

# The Walking Dead

It's great, but how long can this show survive?

**T**HE WALKING DEAD JUST wrapped up its fifth season in style. "Conquer" was an excellent finale that highlighted everything that's been enjoyable about the show since showrunner Scott Gimple took the hot seat.

This is now a series that prioritises characterisation over action, while still being thrilling, surprising and wonderfully, ridiculously violent. Gimple has reintroduced hope into the mix too, which is vital, given how *The Walking Dead's* default state is so often depressing and doomy. The introduction of the Alexandria Safe Zone is the biggest shift to the status quo since the Governor arrived. Rick and his pals have found a home that's worth fighting for. It's not the gunmetal confines of a prison, either, but a lush suburban town. And, if the show sticks to the general map of the comics, then they're going to be there for a good long time...

All of that said, I'm concerned about the chatter coming out of AMC that it could run

for as long as *The Simpsons* (26 years and counting...). It's nice to know that it's not going away any time soon, but really? If we're to take that literally - or even "just" creator Robert Kirkman's speculation that it could run for about 12 seasons - then that raises a number of challenges. Minor comic spoilers ahead...

The most obvious of these is Rick. Andrew Lincoln is the face of this show, but can you see him sticking it out for more than a couple more seasons? Presumably he's not hankering to do an Adam "Ian Beale" Woodyatt and play a single character for the rest of his life. At some point, Rick will have to go. And given that he is still alive in the current issue of the comic (#143 at the time of writing)

## BONUS FEATURES

### ■ Fear The Walking Dead:

The spin-off airs this summer. It's six episodes long, set in Los Angeles and tells the story of the first days of the zombie outbreak. A second season has already been commissioned.

### ■ Hour Of The Wolves:

"Conquer" properly introduced us to the Wolves - a gang of fearsome scavengers who look set to cause all sorts of misery in season six...

■ **Record Breakers:** Season five's first and last episodes broke ratings records for the show, with "No Sanctuary" bringing in 17.29 million viewers in the US, and "Conquer" 15.8 million. This show isn't going away anytime soon...

### ■ Best line: Abraham:

"There is a vast ocean of shit that you people don't know shit about. Rick knows every grain of said shit. And then some."





He really wasn't sure about these new intense facial treatments.

that's going to be a major, though not necessarily fatal, hurdle to overcome. Personally I'd love a series that was more focused on Daryl, Morgan or Michonne. But would the audience follow?

Not so much a hurdle, but something to take into account as the show progresses, is the passage of time. So far *The Walking Dead* has taken place, roughly speaking, over a couple of years. If it's to continue, then it's going to need to move on. Those abandoned cities are going to decay and fall into ruin. The communities will need to change too as resources from before the fall become ever more scarce.

Then there's repetition. Now this is a problem. *The Walking Dead* is naturally inclined to calm periods in settlements, before some disaster uproots the characters and forces them to move on again. For that reason, it's difficult to trust the idea that the Safe Zone is now their home. That said, the comic has kept the Alexandria settlement in play to this day. Will the TV show be able to follow that lead without it becoming visually boring?

But most dangerous of all is the problem of overkill. The series is in its prime right now, with season five bringing in record viewing figures, and there's a spin-off on the way. Fine, but how long is this going to be sustainable? Robert Kirkman has stated that there are plans in place if the show ever starts to drastically lose favour. I don't want *The Walking Dead* to shuffle off any time soon, but let's hope that Kirkman, AMC and co don't try to drag it out forever. Let it die when the time comes. Then, perhaps a few years down the line, resurrect it. That would be wonderfully appropriate. **Will Salmon**

MINDPROGE •

## Joe Layton

Tatau's leading man talks ink jobs and All Blacks

### What attracted you to playing Kyle?

He doesn't enter into the story as a superhero or a detective; he's had enough of his job in London so he and Budgie decide to travel the world. There were so many dimensions to the character. Kind of a dream role for myself because it's a great opportunity to really flex your abilities and learn about where you can go with what you've got and what more you can discover.

### What's so important about Kyle's tattoo?

Kyle decides he's going to get this tattoo before he leaves. It's something he's been sketching but he doesn't have any understanding of the symbols. When he arrives he discovers these symbols mean something and it's fairly obvious from people's reactions that they don't mean "I love mum", they mean something more intense with real depth in this Maori, Cook Island culture.

### Budgie and Kyle are best friends on screen. How did you bond with Theo Barklem-Biggs?

We flew out 12 days before we started shooting and I booked some tickets to go see the All Blacks play, so we went along to that and painted the town red. We have a great friendship and with that came a great working relationship in the sense that we never felt uncomfortable about calling the other person on something and saying, "No, that's a crap idea." And that's only going to have a positive effect on *Tatau*.

### Why should people tune in?

It's something that most people have never had an experience of in terms of this Maori culture. And the beauty of the Cook Islands really comes across on the screen, but there's a real added grit to the series and you get a sense of how people live out there. It's fast-paced, there's twists and turns galore and hopefully it's a really fun and enjoyable and insightful show for people to watch. **Jordan Farley**

*Tatau* airs Sundays on BBC Three.





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**BROADCAST** UK: NO BROADCASTER ANNOUNCED US: SUNDAYS ON FOX

Admit it: you'd quite like to do this too.

# The Last Man On Earth

Comedy at the end of the world

**TELEVISION'S BEEN DISHING** out post-apocalyptic like it's going out of style lately, with high-concept dramas that explore how humanity deals with world's end. And that's precisely why Fox's *The Last Man On Earth* seemed such an inspired alternative. The comedy, created by Phil Lord and Chris Miller (*The Lego Movie*) and star Will Forte (*MacGruber*), posits that by 2020 a virus has run through humanity and all that's left is average, 30-something Phil Miller. For two years, he traverses the continental United States in a camper van looking for someone else – to no avail. Phil leaves a few messages pointing to his ultimate destination in Tucson, Arizona and there he waits.

It's certainly an intriguing idea with a lot of potential for a major US network to attempt,

but it's ultimately spending time with Phil that ruins everything. In the pilot episode, we get to watch him while away his days smashing fish tanks with bowling balls, turn a gorgeous mansion into his squalid den of gross, cut a hole in a diving board so he can poop in a luxury pool, creepily molest a storefront

## BONUS FEATURES

- **Star Turn:** Gary, Greg, Kevin, Anton, Bryce, Daschle, and Jerry... aka Phil's balls. The various sports balls that upstage Phil in every scene they get.
- **Connections:** Will Forte and Kristen Schaal technically worked together before as the duo voiced characters in

*Cloudy With A Chance Of Meatballs 2.*

- **Trivia:** The show was filmed at the famed Iverson Movie Ranch in the Simi Hills above Chatsworth, California, for a time the home of notorious cult leader Charles Manson.
- **Best Line:** Phil: "I swim in it, I drink out of it. There's really no wrong way to use a margarita pool."

mannequin, and best Tom Hanks' *Cast Away* shtick by talking to many inanimate balls (a gag that's 15 years mouldy).

Halfway through Phil's awfully pointless, disgusting adventure, humanity disappearing starts to feel like a mercy killing for us all. That's not to say that Forte doesn't provide some moments of quiet pathos or humour – he's a likeable actor – but his Phil proves to be a non-productive waste of space. It becomes increasingly difficult to root for Phil even when he gets desperate enough to off himself. He's saved that fate by the first in a series of big twists that we won't spoil here, but you can guess considering 13 hours of a one-man TV show is rather untenable.

It's disappointing that the writers waste a premise with so much promise – where they could be exploring the smart, subtle absurdities of fickle humanity – by instead going for the easy poop, bro-judgement, Neanderthal man jokes. With every selfish, mean, horny-obsessed choice Phil makes, he's more and more "that guy" in your office, family or circle of friends you wish a generous apocalypse would take out. **Tara Bennett**

## YOU HAVE BEEN WATCHING... 12 MONKEYS

SFX's Facebook followers give their verdict on the time travel reboot

► I switched off after the first episode I'm afraid. It just lacked that spark of oddness and originality the film had.

**Mark Anderson**

► I saw the first episode and cannot bring myself to watch any more. There are so many TV shows and films about time travel that it has to have something

special to stand out. I just didn't get that hooked from the off.

**Mark Davies**

► Enjoyable but can't help comparing with the original movie which is far better. The leads are not Bruce Willis or Brad Pitt for a start.

**Robert William Graham**

► It's a very different animal to the

film. I've not spotted a particularly duff performance yet so that's good. Although no one has noticed that everything done in the past is just fulfilling the future they already know. I guess they haven't watched enough TV!

**Tom Gray**

► I'm quite enjoying it. Well acted, decent characters and nicely

plotted so far – I think they're deploying Cole's jumping around in time nicely. It's done a good job of establishing itself as its own thing with its own identity and I'm glad I don't find myself constantly comparing it to the film. In fact, I don't ever really think about the film at all when I watch it.

**Ed Prior**

► I love it. The way the story keeps moving makes me long for each new episode. **Henrik Andersson**

► Started to lose interest after six episodes. Same happened with *Helix* but I might just stick this one out. **Stephen Doyle**

► Still not sure. **Tim Upton**

► Terrible show. **Mauricio Enrique Núñez**







Matt Dillon discovers that they don't sell Newcastle Brown either.

BROADCAST UK + US: 14 MAY ON FOX

# Wayward Pines

Barking mad

**DEBUTING IN 126 COUNTRIES** around the world, in 33 languages, on exactly the same day, *Wayward Pines* is one of the biggest television launches in history. If only the show deserved such a lofty pedestal.

Based on Blake Crouch's book and adapted by Chad Hodge, the "event series" marks the

television debut of mystery man M Night Shyamalan. While searching for two missing Secret Service agents, fellow suit Ethan Burke (Matt Dillon) is involved in a car crash and wakes up in the peculiar mountain town of *Wayward Pines* where everything is a little... off. The hospital has no patients, hidden speakers pump out the sound of crickets and the town's inhabitants are almost all aggressive and unhelpful. What's worse, telephone calls go nowhere and all roads out lead straight back

to Strangeville. Burke is trapped, but the big question is: why?

To its credit, the first episode rattles along, unleashing what feels like a full season's worth of plot in 45 minutes. And if you've read *Pines* you'll know the show's not likely to disappoint as the 10-episode season goes on either. It's got a darkly comedic tone that blends laughs and moments of surprising violence well and crucially Matt Dillon is superb as the surly agent stuck in a nightmare town, even if the rest of the cast are often a little too quirky for their own good.

The problem is it does nothing mystery-driven American dramas haven't been doing for 10 years. Take the opening shot – an extreme close-up of an open eye belonging to a battered, bruised and besuited man lying on the floor, surrounded by tall trees in the middle of the day. Yep, it's all but identical to *Lost*'s opening moments, and it's hard to tell whether it's homage or second rate knock-off. There are even flashbacks and hints at pseudo-supernatural weirdness going on.

*Twin Peaks*, *The X-Files*, *The Prisoner* and more recent fair such as *Persons Unknown* and *Ascension* have all done a very similar thing (in most cases better) but the real test will come in how it handles the tale's later twists and turns. For now it's hard to see the wood for the trees. **Jordan Farley**

## BONUS FEATURES

- **I See Dead People:** Worried this is another "and he was dead all along" tale for M Night? Worry not – his one proviso for signing on was that the Big Reveal had nothing to do with the afterlife.
- **Shot In The Arm:** M Night directs the first episode, and his trademark flourishes are all over it – notably characters looking directly into the camera.
- **Extra Reading:** There are two more books in the series – *Wayward* and *The Last Town*. It's also part of Kindle Worlds – a fan fiction programme that allows anyone to write stories set in the same world.
- **Best Line:** Ethan: "I'm not having a dissociative breakdown. You see, it's not me, it's this town."

BROADCAST UK: THURSDAYS ON WATCH US: FINISHED AIRING ON ABC

# Resurrection

Life before death would be nice

**PREPARE TO ENTER A WHOLE** new dimension of dull!" is either the world's worst tagline or a warning that should precede every episode of *Resurrection*. Except that makes it sound too exciting.

The show's central premise screams "miniseries"; it's basically a US variation on the French *The Returned* with dead people returning to life in a small town called Arcadia.

By the end of the first run of eight episodes the writers were already lethargically treading water trying to convince us this was an ongoing series. Then somebody commissioned 13 more. Sadly, nobody came up with enough plot to fill more than three of them.

The problem with high-concept shows that kick off with pilots full of mystery is that the



"Today's lesson concerns high-concept TV shows."

audience wants answers. With a miniseries they can reasonably expect answers. With an ongoing series all they get is delaying tactics. Admittedly, *The Returned* is an ongoing series too, but, like last year's impressive US show *The Leftovers*, the Gallic series made it clear from the off that it's not really bothered about why what's happening is happening; it's more concerned with the fall-out. Also like *The Leftovers*, being weird helped. Enigmatic pomposity can paper over plot holes.

*Resurrection*, though, is a bland mishmash of *X-Files* conspiracy arcs and *Under The Dome*,

## BONUS FEATURES

- **Ratings:** After the first season averaged 9.32 million viewers per episodes, season two's figures fell from 8.38 million to 3.73 million, averaging just 4.73 million. A third season looks very unlikely.
- **It's Wossisname!** Preacher James is played by Jim Parrack who was Hoyt in *True Blood*.
- **Musical Interlude:** In the final scene of the season, Rachael sings the song

"Nature Boy" to her locust-magnet baby. The weirdly enchanting song with its mystifying lyrics was originally recorded by Nat King Cole in 1948 and written by a proto-hippy called eden ahbez; he was born George Aberle, raised as George McGrew and eventually changed his name to capital-eschewing ahbez. He was part of a movement that was known as the "Nature Boys".

► **Best Line:** Bellamy: "When were you going to tell me I died in 1934?"

with small town-Americans reacting exactly the way small-town Americans wouldn't in the face of extreme weirdness. It's geared to be all about the answers. There are some interesting twists to the nature of the resurrections, sure, but they're never exploited, and the tone of the series is relentlessly dour.

Even when it introduces a mad preacher and an *Omen* vibe in the final few episodes the results are more humdrum than hellish.

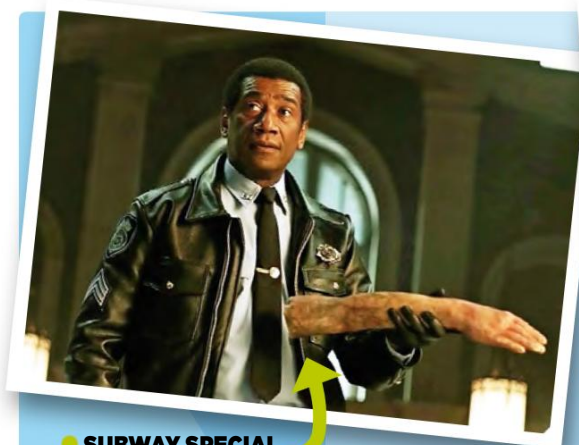
Why do the dead come back to life in Arcadia? Maybe it's purgatory. Like watching the show. **Dave Golder**





# SPURIOUS AWARDS

Celebrating the silliest moments from the month in TV



## SUBWAY SPECIAL OF THE MONTH

In *Gotham*, the cops don't have to settle for just donuts and coffee.

## CHILDREN'S LITERARY HERO OF THE MONTH

So *Grimm* had a guy who morphs into a rabbit. And he's called Peter. Was this some kind of Beatrix Potter crossover episode?



## THAT'S JUST BOASTING OF THE MONTH

Cisco in *The Flash* appears to have built his own sonic screwdriver. We think, however, he may be over-compensating for something.



## UNEXPECTED FANTASY SHOW OF THE MONTH

*Casualty* did a *Sliding Doors* episode. Badly. It broke all the rules by changing the order events happened in each go-round.



## STRICTLY COME DANCING AUDITIONS OF THE MONTH

Elijah and Freya perform their interpretation of Torvill and Dean's "Bolero" in *The Originals*.

## FOOD CRITIC OF THE MONTH

Root orders the 200-year-old ostrich egg at Heston Blumenthal's restaurant in *Person Of Interest*.



## GEEKIEST QUIZ OF THE MONTH

Full marks to game show *The Edge*. Acceptable answers for "Who's played the Doctor since 2005?" included Paul McGann and John Hurt!

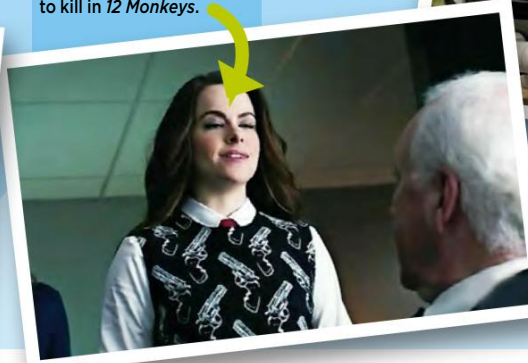


## KARAOKE KING OF THE MONTH

Trust SHIELD to show up at the wrong moment. Now we'll never know if Angar the Screamer was going to do "Lady In Red" or "Livin' On A Prayer".

## FASHION STATEMENT OF THE MONTH

Jennifer Goines is dressed to kill in *12 Monkeys*.



## GUEST STAR OF THE MONTH

Good to see the Tachikomas from *Ghost In The Shell* are still finding gainful employment in *Thunderbirds Are Go*.





# TOTAL RECALL

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF TIMELESS SF

## Science Fiction And Fantasy



Yep, that's the sort of thing we'll happily watch.



### RICHARD EDWARDS, EDITOR

Yes, I know this feels like a no-brainer – the editor of a market-leading science fiction and fantasy magazine raving about the thing that pays his wages. But this 20th anniversary issue of *SFX* feels as good a time as any to sing the praises of the most versatile, most exciting, most vibrant and most inventive

genre on this – or (I'm assuming) any other – planet. Sci-fi and fantasy are awesome!

Sci-fi and fantasy fans may have spent years being told they're nerds, geeks, outsiders, whatever, but I think we're having the last laugh. Superheroes are dominant at the box office, while TV shows like *Game Of Thrones*, *The Walking Dead* and *Doctor Who* consistently top the ratings. Why? The rest of the world has finally realised the vast storytelling potential of stepping outside conventional reality. They've seen that genre isn't just about spaceships and strange creatures – though they're still important, of course – and that it can also be used to tell totally relatable stories. After all, as we've known forever, sci-fi and

fantasy frequently tell us more about our contemporary world than "conventional" fiction could ever dream of.

So if anyone says they *don't* like sci-fi and/or fantasy they're lying. Ask them if they like a bit of *Lost*, enjoy hanging out in Middle-earth, or read the occasional Terry Pratchett novel – chances are pretty much everyone has a bit of genre in their closet. They don't have to like everything under that sci-fi umbrella, because nobody should expect to. Sci-fi is way too broad a church for that, taking in mind-bending complexity, gut-wrenching emotion and – on occasion – outright hilarity.

It's the genre of imagination, responsible for inspiring astronauts to travel into space, and inventors to develop the technology that makes the modern world go round. And we're currently living in one of the most exciting times in sci-fi's history, where it's high profile, ubiquitous, and the people making it – the Josses, JJs and George RRs – love it as much as we do. They're making such good stuff that it really is a privilege to be writing about a genre that can surprise, excite and make you whoop for joy like no other. Give it another 20 years and sci-fi and fantasy really will have taken over the world. **SFX**

### FACT ATTACK!

- Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) is widely regarded as the first proper science fiction novel.
- Ever wondered how to define sci-fi and fantasy? Here's a handy summary from *The Twilight Zone* creator Rod Serling: "Fantasy is the impossible made probable. Science fiction is the improbable made possible."
- The first person to coin the term "sci-fi" was the late Forest J Ackerman in 1953.
- Of the top 50 highest grossing movies of all time, only five wouldn't qualify as "SFX territory".

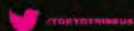
SEE YOU NEXT MONTH! 27 MAY 2015 DETAILS ON PAGE 25



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# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, SFX!

Twenty years!

I never dreamed when I appeared on the cover of *SFX*'s first issue that girls who weren't even born yet would cosplay as Tank Girl at conventions. I autograph their arms and they tattoo it on there and they come back the next day to show me later. They still love that movie.

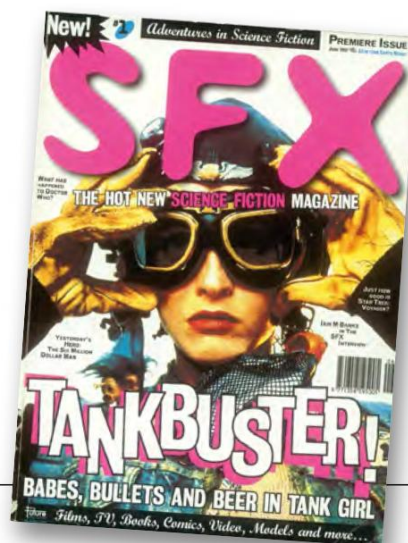
I always thought there was more to heaven and earth than we can wrap our brains around, but I was never a comic book geek. But I paint and I draw, so I appreciate the art. And after looking at the *Tank Girl* comic book by Jamie Hewlett and Alan Martin, I just knew the movie was going to be a blast. That it would be perfect and sexy and funny and badass. That it would have all the things that guys got to do, that women didn't get to do in movies.

The movie didn't make that much money, because MGM didn't keep it out long enough. The stupid ratings board rated it R, and there's not one thing that's R in the movie. Seriously. There's no nudity. It's not scary. It's goofy. So I really believe it was given an R because it was a female protagonist who was talking shit.

Now I'm on *Orange Is The New Black*, with plenty of female protagonists, where women are talking to each other and *not* talking about their love life. They're just people talking about their life. Which is what women are – they're human beings, not just the person in a movie to prove that the lead guy is straight.

I'm super proud that I was your first cover girl, *SFX*. And I hope I can deserve that coveted space one more time before it's all over with. Twenty years! Good job. I'm really proud of you! Come on. What lasts twenty years?!

Lori Petty







SPACE: 1995



# SPACE: 1995







## SFX launch editor Matt Bielby remembers the year it all began...

**W**HEN WE LAUNCHED *SFX*, in 1995, the genre wasn't the all-conquering colossus it is now – *A Game Of Thrones* was a year away, the first *Harry Potter* novel was still being rejected by publishers, and *Doctor Who* was in the middle of its decade-and-a-half in the doldrums – but we had reasons to be cheerful nonetheless.

Though we only half-realised it at the time, a golden age was stuttering into life. Cyberpunk may have had its day as a literary subgenre, but its influence was everywhere; ditto Japanese animation; and a mix of old and new special effects technology was making affordable, impressive revamps of old, dead genres like the alien invasion movie (*Independence Day*) or the disaster movie (*Armageddon*) suddenly viable again. Soon, if you could imagine it, it would be possible to bring it in convincing enough fashion to the big screen, a first in movie history.

And other stars were aligning too. There'd be a revolution in television, with ambitious new shows bringing new audiences – teenage girls! Ageing literary SF fans! – to the media SF&F space in ever-increasing numbers. And on the bookshelves,

fantasy in all its flavours – from Pratchett through Rowling and Martin, to the urban fantasy of the Anita Blake books – was starting to establish a mainstream appeal that SF has rarely enjoyed.

The mid-'90s was – though we didn't fully realise this at the time either – the last great boom period for the newsstand magazine industry: technology made them cheaper and easier to put together than ever, the internet hadn't eroded their market yet and exciting stuff was happening all over. *Loaded* and the modern incarnation of *FHM* had just launched; *Wired* was huge in America; *Wallpaper* was on its way; and business for recent creations like *Max Power*, *Men's Health* and *Four Four Two* was booming. A few years before or a few years after, and nobody would have risked creating an in-no-way-a-sure-thing proposition like *SFX* – but the Goldilocks moment was now.

Notoriously *SFX* began with the *Tank Girl* film on the cover – cool, cultish, edgy, and now largely forgotten – which not everybody loved, but these days it seems the right decision. It set out our stall early, it said we'd talk about the interesting and quirky as well as the mainstream hits, and helped give the whole production a bit of British spunk and vim. (And besides, the early summer's two biggest SF movies – *Judge Dredd* and *Batman Forever* – weren't ready for us yet, didn't know who we were, or probably both. They became our next two covers – and if they're better remembered than *Tank Girl*, they're not better loved.)

The *X-Files*. *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. *Babylon 5*. *Lois & Clark*. Each of *SFX*'s four big early shows had, in differing degrees, largely ensemble casts, series-long story arcs, detailed mythology, a near-obsessive need to juxtapose violence and threat with bantering wit, and endless foreshadowing and everything-you-thought-was-true-is-wrong plot twists – the building blocks of modern TV. Even the publicity shots, with their casts standing at angles to each other staring into the middle distance, began with these shows.

And so did a newly reinvigorated form of fandom. Characters like the *X-Files*' Scully were bringing more women into sci-fi than ever before; creators like *Babylon 5*'s J Michael Straczynski engaged with those watching (though Usenet newsgroups, not Twitter!) in unprecedented fashion; and everyone – not least one Russell T Davies – was inspired by the new possibilities of genre.

Oh, science fiction and fantasy were still cultish, still geeky – or whatever you want to call it. But the big hits of our world were now becoming cultural touchstones too, and *SFX* was here – just in time – to chronicle it all.

Mulder and Scully do the interesting angle thing.



## ALSO IN '95



UK TV sees debuts for *Father Ted*, *Hollyoaks* and the Colin Firth *Pride And Prejudice*.

Six of the top ten films are *SFX* territory: *Toy Story*, *GoldenEye*, *Batman Forever*, *Casper*, *Waterworld* and *Jumanji*.



Bill Clinton is in his first term as President of the US, John Major is Britain's PM.

Blur and Oasis fight the "Battle of Britpop", and after 25 years The Beatles get back for "Free As A Bird".

In September a new format called DVD is announced...



After a six-year break, James Bond returned in *GoldenEye* in our first year.



*Batman Forever* didn't quite make our debut cover.





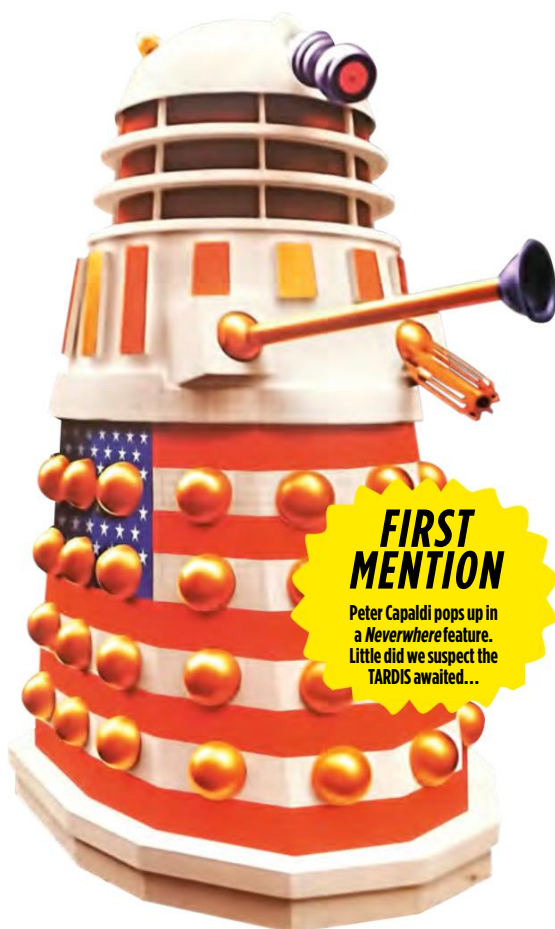


## PHASE 1 1995-1997

Scully's discomfort gave us pleasure for many years.

# THE TRUTH IS IN HERE

After 1,995 years of waiting, the world finally lays its hungry eyes on *SFX*...



### FIRST MENTION

Peter Capaldi pops up in a *Neverwhere* feature. Little did we suspect the TARDIS awaited...

**T**HE TIMING OF *SFX*'S launch was hardly ideal. An anxious editorial team faced a momentous decision: *Tank Girl* or *Street Fighter* for the cover?

Inside the first issue a lead news story bemoaned the lack of British TV sci-fi – we were so desperate we convinced ourselves *Bugs* was sci-fi enough to cover – and we were in the midst of the first great *Doctor Who* drought (though we do mention Paul McGann...). But this formative era of the magazine was about to stumble onto its first great gold mine: *The X-Files*.

A huge close-up of Mulder stared out of issue four and *SFX* went from borderline profit to bona fide success. By issue 19 the X-phenomena was so huge that *SFX* could publish an issue in a plain black plastic bag

with nothing on it other than our logo, the *X-Files* logo and the words “The Truth Is In Here”. It sold out.

Publishing wisdom suggested that big blockbuster movies would be the meat and potatoes for the magazine, but after blockbuster turkeys like *Judge Dredd* and *Batman Forever*, *SFX* swung behind TV instead. A new show called *Babylon 5* was making waves: that made the cover. *Deep Space Nine* was recovering from a dodgy start: that made the cover too. Oddly, *Voyager*, the much-hyped new *Trek* show that graced the first-ever Couch Potato feature, never made the cover until it cast a sexy Borg later on.

*Doctor Who* returned – US style, with Paul McGann in a dodgy wig. It was great for sales, but sadly US audiences were unimpressed and no series materialised.



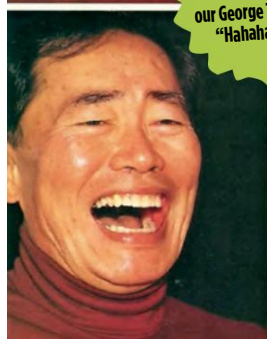
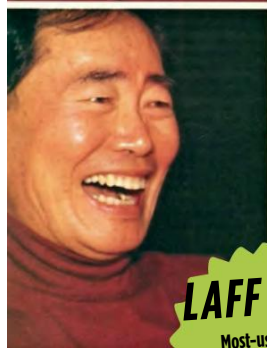
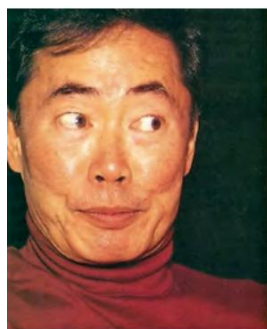
Voyager gave us the latest *Trek* team photo.



*Independence Day* invaded our world in 1996.







**LAFF IT UP!**

Most-used word in our George Takei interview: "Hahahahahaha!"

## WHAT IF?

James Cameron touting his version of a Spider-Man film: "It's basically the Last Temptation of Peter Parker."



Red Dwarf: who needed CGI?!

## OOOPS!

The first book in some fantasy series called *A Song Of Ice And Fire* gets a review score of C-. Clearly it's going nowhere.



## "It's painful to recall how excited we were by the *Star Wars* prequels"

This period also boasted our first Anthony Head interview, for *Sliders*. Little did we realise he'd rarely not feature in one sci-fi franchise or another over the next 20 years...

This was also the dawn of the CG age. Features on special effects rapidly morphed from pictures of men by models to pictures of men by wireframes on computer screens (hello, *Jumanji*...). *Toy Story* became the first ever movie entirely created by pixels.

The word "Spoilers" entered the zeitgeist, spurring the magazine to create The Spoiler Zone. At first it was a sealed section, which was a bit of a gimmick, to be honest, but soon it became a cause of bragging rights among readers who refused to open it.

By the end of *SFX* phase one Hollywood started making half-way decent SF films with *12 Monkeys* and *Men In Black*. Then *Alien Resurrection* came along and halted that trend.

And, laying part of the foundations of *SFX* Phase 2, George Lucas announced the *Star Wars* prequels. It's painful to recall how excited we were. **Dave Golder**

## BEST HEADLINES

**"STAND BY FOR AUCTION"**

Sale of Gerry Anderson puppets (#6)

**"HACK (AND SLASH) WRITER"**

David Gemmell (who was not impressed) (#10)

**"PHWOOOOOAH-HH-RRIOR PRINCESS"**

Xena (#19)

**"CURRY AND SHIPS"**

*Star Trek* digital FX supervisor Dan Curry (#24)

**"WOOKIEE HORROR PICTURE SHOW"**

*Star Wars* interactive game (#25)

**"FROM VIR TO ETERNITY"**

*Babylon 5* actor Stephen Furst interview (#26)

**"THE GAMERA NEVER LIES"**

Toho news story (#29)

## DON'T QUOTE ME

"I miss having a f\*\*king model of *Babylon 5* sitting on my desk – that's the downside."

Ron Thornton on the disadvantage of virtual FX (#3)

"I'm going to look like a tosser; I'm going to feel like a tosser!"

Paul McGann on being *Doctor Who* (#3)

"I'm happy to say I've only seen one episode of those two non-actors struggling with their lines."

*Quatermass* creator Nigel Kneale on *The X-Files* (#14)

"I'd like to do a lot more scenes with Kes – flat-out pornographic sex scenes."

*Star Trek Voyager's* Ethan Phillips (#16)

"I think I've relied on technobabble to get myself out of a plot hole one too many times..."

*Star Trek* writer/producer Brannon Braga never said a truer word (#21)

"The sweat I lick off my lover's neck/Her smile after the spank."

Lyrics from *Babylon 5's* Claudia Christian's single, "Taboo"







## THE SFX YEARS

### MOST BAFFLING HEADLINE

**"SUBLIMATOR DREAMING"**  
— used for a *Total Recall* 2070 feature in issue 56. It was supplied by a freelance writer and no one on the team wanted to admit they didn't understand what it meant...

**T**HE X-FILES WAS ON the wane. Its lead actors were leaving or becoming part-timers and its showrunner seemed desperate to prove he wasn't a one-trick chupacabra with *Harsh Realm*, *Millennium* and *The Lone Gunmen*. *SFX* needed a new icon to champion.

She came from California. She regularly slayed vampires. She quipped pop-culturally. She was "awesome" and she bought a whole new readership to the magazine. Welcome to the Whedonverse.

Joss Whedon made our genre unexpectedly cool and sexy and hip. *Buffy* stars were soon on the cover of every other issue (or so it seemed). By the end of *SFX* Phase 2, with the spin-off *Angel* also to his name, Whedon was officially King of the Geeks (he was even writing *X-Men* comics). It was a crown taken from George Lucas, deposed for giving us Jar Jar Binks, among other crimes, in *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace*. This was not the prequel we were looking for.

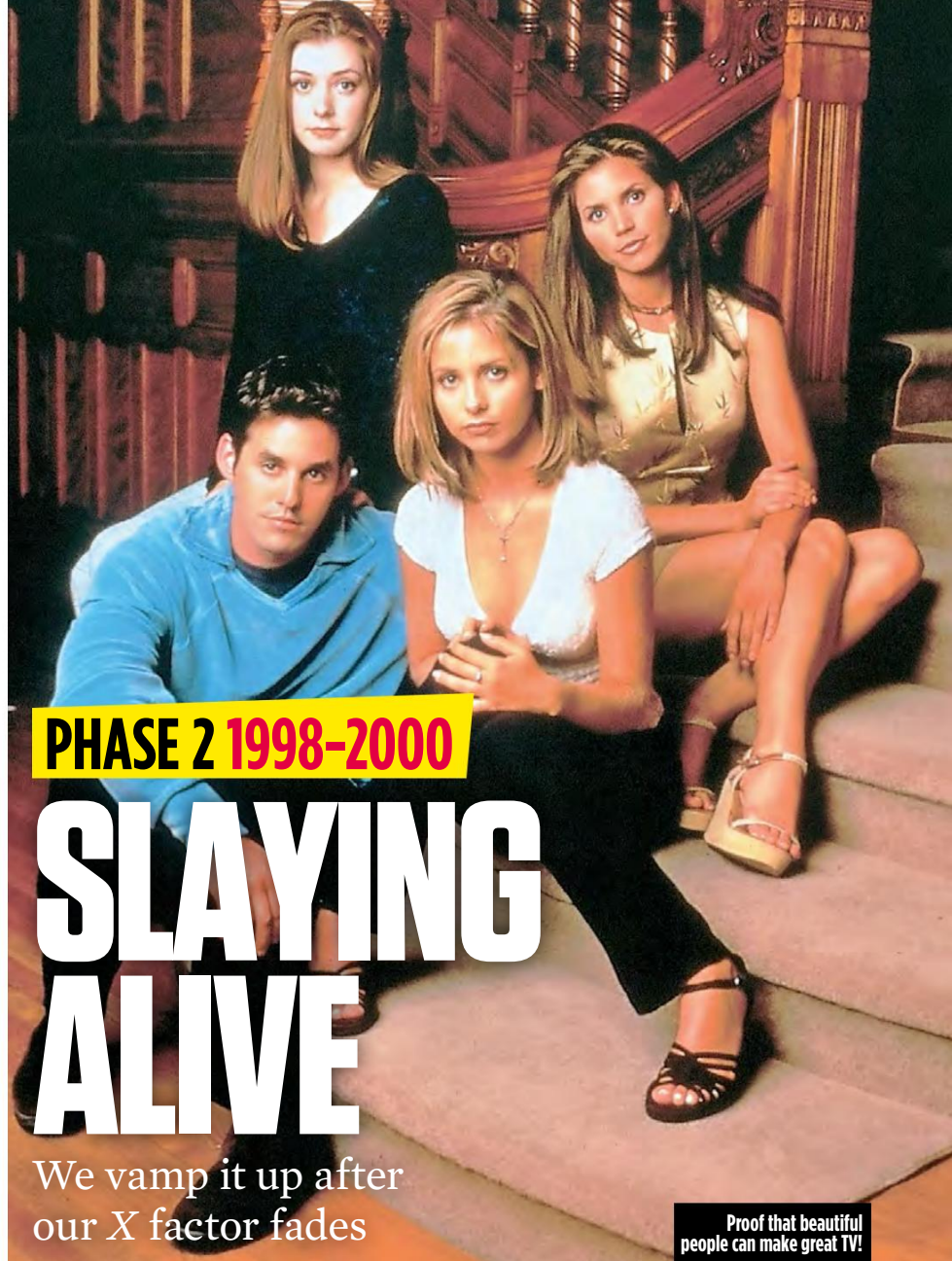
### FIRST MENTION

Russell T Davies in the long defunct *Heroes And Villains* regular feature, winning kudos for using the opening titles of *Doctor Who* as a visual metaphor for boffing in *Queer As Folk*.

Xena and Hercules both crossed the River Styx and US TV was full of now half-remembered one-season wonders, some which deserved to be (*Mercy Point*, *Freakylinks*, *Level 9*) others which didn't (*Good Versus Evil*, *Now And Again*). But *Stargate SG-1*, a spin-off from a dodgy movie that arrived looking like it had an "AXE ME" sign pinned to its back, defied all expectations to spawn a 14-year franchise.



**Godzilla: tough franchise to get right?**



**PHASE 2 1998-2000**

# SLAYING ALIVE

We vamp it up after our X factor fades

Proof that beautiful people can make great TV!

In Britain things were improving in quantity if not always quality: *Red Dwarf 8* killed off the series for a good few years, Rob Grant's *The Strangerers* flopped on Sky and BBC One's *Crime Traveller* had *SFX* readers spitting bile all over our letters pages (we had them cleaned). Two gems, though, were Channel 4's stylish and much-loved vampire show *Ultraviolet* and BBC One's remake of the wonderfully bat's-arse *Randall And Hopkirk (Deceased)* starring Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer.

We were also intrigued by a new show



*Ultraviolet*, but *not* the one with Milla Jovovich.

from Henson's Creature Workshop called *Farscape*. It was a bit of a slow burner, and we didn't truly fall in love with it until the next phase, but the freaky aliens and toilet humour appealed immediately.

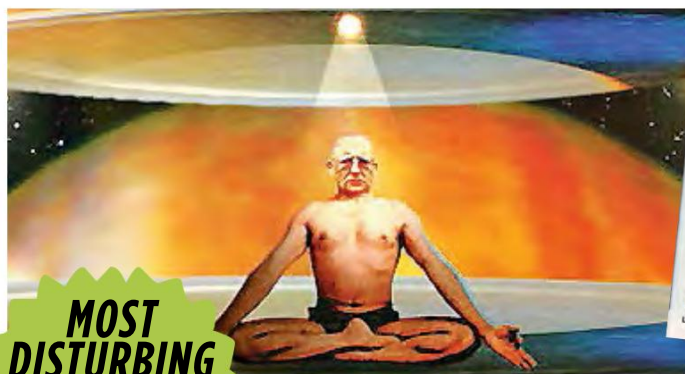
Terry Pratchett provided us with a diary of his signing tour of Australia ("It turns out to be a polished scythe blade on a black velvet lining... 'Will I sign it?' What would you do?") Iain Banks mused that after *Inversions*, "There might be one more *Culture* novel..." A promising new writer called China appeared on our radar with *Perdido Street Station*.



Blazing a trail in the new century's *X-Men*.







## MOST DISTURBING IMAGE

A half-naked Mr Bronson (Michael Sheard) in the promo for the never-produced British sci-fi series *New Frontier*.



## "Buffy stars were soon on the cover of every other issue (or so it seemed)"

We had superb access to – and devoted untold pages to – Roland Emmerich's *Godzilla*. Something of a bad decision that. Hell, at least we had the sense not to put John Travolta's *Battlefield Earth* on the cover. *The Blair Witch Project* launched a trend for cheap and dingy – sorry, found-footage – films that persists to this day, while *The Matrix* changed special FX forever, introducing "bullet time" to the zeitgeist.

Most importantly, the seeds of what would become the mighty Marvel Cinematic Universe were being sown. Popular opinion suggests it was Bryan Singer's brilliant *X-Men* (2000) that redrew the blueprint for superhero movies for the new millennium, but the original *Blade* in '98 was the quiet big bang of this phenomenon... **Dave Golder**



## EASIEST FEATURE TO WRITE

Isn't It About Time You Gave *Crime Traveller* Another Chance? (#38)



## SCARIEST IMAGE

Is it Norman Bates's mother? No it's the Aunt May action figure. Shudder.

## BEST HEADLINES

"SPACE: A BUG AND BEYOND"

*Starship Troopers* (#34)

"CALIFORNIA SCREAMING"

*Buffy* (#35)

"DESIGNER GENES"

*Gattaca* (#37)

"WHALING FREQUENCIES OPEN"

Patrick Stewart in *Moby Dick* (#38)

"SLAYMATE OF THE YEAR"

*Buffy* (#51)

"ARE YOU READY TUVOK?"

Tim Russ interview (#65)

"THE TALENTED MR RIDLEY"

Ridley Scott interview (#72)

1998 - 2000



## DON'T QUOTE ME

"I would never work without these people. I'm trying to figure out how *Alien 5* can star a bunch of high schoolers." Joss Whedon (#35)

"I'm meant to get on top of Michael Dorn but I can't get my leg over. I said, 'My god, you're the size of Italy.'" *Deep Space Nine*'s Terry Farrell revealing too much information (#37)

"I regard this as a rehearsal for playing Gandalf." Christopher Lee, interviewed while appearing in *The New Adventures Of Robin Hood* (#45)

"One of the writers suggested that Crichton loses his bladder control for season three." Ben Browder, *Farscape* (#70)

"I think Robert Beltran should stop whining and do his job – print that if you want." *Voyager* producer Kenneth Biller (#72)

"*Farscape* is the one thing that's between me and waitressing at the moment." Claudia Black, *Farscape* (#72)





## THE SFX YEARS



One of a thousand clashes in *The Lord Of The Rings*.

PHASE 3 2001-2004

# POSTCARDS FROM MIDDLE-EARTH

Fantasies begin to come true as the 21st century rolls in



Six arms very good, and two not bad either.

**F**ANTASY DOMINATED the third age of SFX as *Harry Potter* and *The Lord Of The Rings* cast their enchantments over the box office. It was a time of magic.

A time of upheaval. A time of successive *Potter* directors promising the next film was darker and grittier than the last one.

These were also the formative years for the current superhero boom. *Spider-Man 2*, *X2* and (arguably) *Blade 2* were all superior to their predecessors, though *Daredevil*, *Hulk* and the Thomas Jane take on *The Punisher* were less successful, especially Ang Lee's

brave but misjudged near-art-house version of the jolly green giant. A shared universe, though, was still the pipe dream of net forums.

Superheroes were also making a small-screen impact. *Smallville* began a 10-season run with the producers promising: "Our Superman doesn't wear tights." It proved that you could really overhaul a franchise and still succeed. *Mutant X* was an *X-Men* series in all but writs, while *Birds Of Prey* tried – briefly – to bring Batman mythology to TV.

*Star Trek: Nemesis* was a limp final fling for the *Next Gen* crew, though it did give us our first taste of Tom Hardy in amusingly expletive-heavy interview mode. Even limper



Wonder if he can still fit into that hat...



Oh crumbs, Keanu Reeves has taken over Freeview.

### MISSING IN ACTION:

Joss Whedon and Anthony Stewart Head were convinced that *Ripper*, a Rupert Giles spin-off from *Buffy* set in the UK, would happen. One day...







## PROPHECY!

Right at the end of this phase, the BBC officially announced that *Doctor Who* was coming back. Look who we predicted would make a good companion for the new Doctor!

Age: 49  
 CV: *Holby City*, *Dangerfield*  
**Good Doctor:** One of Davies's choices a few years ago, he's got the experience, the looks and the manner. Could be a strong field choice.  
**Bad Doctor:** Would the BBC risk going with such an unbankable name?  
**Ideal co-star:** Billie Piper.



## TIME WARP!

*SFX's* back page explored parallel worlds where the mag had started in the Victorian age, put Captain America on the cover in World War 2 and then went a bit *Look-In* with *Logan's Run* in the '70s...

was *Voyager's* final episode. Still, there was always Scott Bakula and his pooch in *Enterprise* to look forward to, if you could survive the theme tune.

*The Matrix* sequels bored and baffled audiences in equal measures. *Donnie Darko* convinced everybody that Richard Kelly was the new god of cinema until we saw his next film.

*Shaun Of The Dead* was the best zombie film in years – even though it was a comedy – and shot Simon Pegg to stardom, but not before he brought his *Spaced* mates to a Couch Potato (he all too briefly wrote a column for the mag too).

Neil Gaiman gave us *American Gods*, the book that marked his transition to novelist after more than a decade of creating the comic book mythology of *Sandman*. Years later he would guest edit *SFX*. He lost his legendary leather jacket somewhere along the way.

In comics Mark Millar and Bryan Hitch remade the Marvel Universe with *The Ultimates*. We're still feeling the aftershocks on the big screen...

The biggest thing on TV was *Battlestar Galactica*, which *SFX* loved from the pilot. Here was SF unashamedly for grown-ups, and who cared that Starbuck had had a sex change? A worrying amount of fans and original Starbuck Dirk Benedict, that's who. So we ignored them.

*The X-Files* finally closed, with David Duchovny returning for the finale three or four years too late to have any real impact. *Buffy* ended – rather more spectacularly – but luckily for *SFX's* covers James Marsters joined *Angel* for its last, terrific year. Whedon then created *Firefly* – an apt name considering how brightly and briefly it shone.

And right at the end of this phase *Lost* premiered... And we were all pretty much none the wiser six years later when it finished. So, just who was Locke again...?

Dave Golder *Continued on page 018*

**"Simon Pegg brought his *Spaced* mates to an *SFX* Couch Potato"**

## DON'T QUOTE ME

"The line, 'Don't screw this up,' which is used in the promos, is definitely typical of this series."

Brannon Braga, not realising how prophetic he's being about *Star Trek: Enterprise*

"I used to feel very embarrassed when I'd have to come down and have to say, 'Could your orgasm be a little bit louder?'"

*Buffy* producer  
 Marti Noxon

"My nickname around the show is Amy Snacker."

Amy Acker, *Angel*

"Tom Welling has the worst Christopher Walken impression I've ever seen and he will insist on doing it."

Allison Mack, *Smallville*

"I don't know how to do special effects myself, but I know when they're good – it's like pornography."

Jonathan Frakes, director, *Thunderbirds*



## EVER BEEN AD?

The *Martian Chronicles* was our faux small ads page, starting in issue 101. An Official Uncle Owen And Aunt Beru Barbecue Set – complete with crispy figures – redefined the very notion of bad taste.

## BEST HEADLINES

### "FOR A FEW DARLAS MORE"

Julie Benz, Darla in *Angel/Buffy* interview (#78)

### "ATTACK OF THE GROANS"

Reaction to *Star Wars* Episode II title (#83)

### "HP SORCERY"

*Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone* (#84)

### "GOING FOR GOA'ULD"

*Stargate SG-1* (#85)

### "NEVER MIND THE MORLOCKS"

*The Time Machine* (#92)

### "THE FORESIGHT SAGA"

*The Dead Zone* (#97)

### "HI, HI MISS AMERICAN SPY"

*Alias* (#102)

### "WELLING, WELLING, WELLING HUH! TELL ME MORE TELL ME MORE..."

Tom Welling interview (#123)



# THE PRICE IS \$ RIGHT

You could find out what your favourite collectables are worth thanks to auctioneers Vectis

**E**ver wondered how much money is lurking in your loft? A lifetime of hoarding geek memorabilia could finally have paid off as sci-fi and fantasy merchandise is more desirable than ever, which is why you might want to find out how much your accumulated collectables are worth. That's where Vectis come in. The auctioneers specialise in collectable toys and hold five auctions per month, with approximately 700 lots each day. Not looking to make your fortune? You can also find plenty of deals on rare collectables through Vectis, with some desirable lots going for bargain prices. Every auction is streamed online, so you can even bid in your pyjamas!

To give you an idea of what your collectables might be worth, here are eight sci-fi collectables recently sold by Vectis, with reasons for their value given by Vectis experts Kathy Taylor and Andy Reed.



For more information on Vectis and the lots past and present visit [www.vectis.co.uk](http://www.vectis.co.uk).

## BOBA FETT 3 3/4" VINTAGE FIGURE

Of course the galaxy's biggest badass was going to sell for mega-bucks, but there are special reasons why this particular Han Solo-snatcher sold for an eye-watering £15k. "Originally this figure was only available as a 'mail-a-way' freebie in the UK - acquired by redeeming parts of card backs posted off to Palitoy," say Vectis. "Consequently when it hit shops as a 30B card, most kids already had the figure. This iconic character is highly collectable in all forms, and those collectors with a run of 30B cards find it almost impossible to find the Boba Fett in this packaging variation. Supply and demand dictates this to be one of the most desirable production Star Wars 3 3/4" figures."

**SOLD FOR:  
£15,000**



## DR NO UK QUAD POSTER

They don't make posters like they used to. For starters, no one's going to be spending £3,000 on Hollywood's latest photoshop monstrosity in 50 years time. And let's face it, nothing looks cooler on your wall than James Bond. Amazingly, this particular one-sheet could have gone for even more. "This is a rare poster, although it's not in perfect condition as it has been linen backed," say Vectis. "They don't appear on the market very often and so buyers are willing to pay a premium price. An un-restored excellent condition poster would fetch around £4,000-£6,000."



**SOLD FOR:  
£3,000**



**STAR TREK 3 3/4" ACTION FIGURES**

Logic would dictate that more popular characters such as Spock and Scotty should sell for more than blink-and-you'll-miss-'em background players such as a Zaranite officer or a Megarite, from *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. But often the opposite is true. "Mego obtained the rights for *Motion Picture* merchandising. The majority of the rarer alien figures were available only in Canada or Italy because the distributors paid upfront for them at the time. The aliens were released in the USA as a JC Penney 'baggie' set (not available on the cards). Within this lot there were three Megarites and two Zaranites (the rarer figures) and the condition of the cards is great! Hence the high price obtained for these little 3" figures."

**SOLD FOR:**  
**£620**
**ALIEN HR GIGER PRINT**

This Space Jockey illustration was one of six prints produced for *Alien's* release in 1979, and was limited to just 350 pieces (only 100 released for sale). This is number 240/350, signed in pencil by HR Giger. The film's prestige and the limited nature of this iconic image was what helped fetch £500, say Vectis.

**SOLD FOR:**  
**£500**
**DOCTOR WHO'S ASTRO RAY DALEK GUN**

Forget Sonic Screwdrivers and bowties, *Doctor Who* is epitomised by an Astro Ray Gun. Er, right? There's no denying the retro charm of this chunky torch/plunger dart gun combo dating all the way back to 1965. You might struggle to find some U11 batteries though. "*Doctor Who* toys from the 1960s are scarce and sought-after," say Vectis. "They were not as plentiful as the vast range currently available, so this Ray Gun made a good price within its original box."

**SOLD FOR:**  
**£500**
**BATMAN GIFT SET**

Sounds obvious, but sometimes the difference between something fetching a hefty sum and the opportunity to nab a bargain can be little more than a few blemishes on the packaging, as with this trio of Bat vehicles. "This is not a particularly rare set in itself, there will be many of this type of Corgi gift sets around in varying conditions. However, the superb condition of this set, which can only be described as in 'shop-stock' condition, was why it commanded the premium price," Vectis say.

**SOLD FOR:**  
**£1,100**
**SPACE: 1999 EAGLE TRANSPORTER**

This Gerry Anderson Signature Edition of the iconic Eagle Transporter from *Space: 1999* is surprisingly big and fetched a good price because it was in excellent condition. "This superb large-scale 23" model comes with a numbered certificate individually signed by Gerry Anderson. There are many collectors who love anything related to Mr Anderson!" Vectis say.

**SOLD FOR:**  
**£580**
**JAMES BOND BUBBLE BATH**

Nothing says Bond like a, er, nice relaxing bubble bath but it's often the odder items that spark the most interest at auction. "An unusual item, something like this is very rare to find complete and in this condition. They do not appear on the open market very often," say Vectis. Shaken, not stirred?

**SOLD FOR:**  
**£300**





MY SCI-FI

# THEIR SCI-FI

Some choice celeb picks from *SFX*'s My Sci-Fi column...



## Favourite TV Shows

"I used to love *Rentaghost*, but I found the theme quite scary because of Timothy Claypole's laugh at the end."

MATT LUCAS

**"Star Trek. Even William Shatner's hammy acting worked."**

ROGER MCGUINN, THE BYRDS

"I really like *Voyager*. That could have been mainly down to Captain Janeway. My type of woman."

JIMMY GREAVES



"I love everything about *Doctor Who* – it is fantastic and the scripts are brilliant and I think it's made in Wales, isn't it?"

ALEX JAMES, BLUR



**"I'm absolutely addicted to *Medium*. I've probably seen every episode at least six times."**

TOYAH WILCOX

"I watched *Lost*. I thought the first series was fantastic, then it became more of an endurance thing."

RUSSELL HOWARD

**"Dollhouse is really underrated."**

JONATHAN ROSS



"It's all *Buffy* for me. Do you know Joss Whedon tweeted about my musical *Matilda* yesterday? F\*\*king best day of my life!"

TIM MINCHIN

"I loved *Red Dwarf* and *Quantum Leap* to the point of obsession. All my Christmas presents were books about them."

JOSIE LONG

## Favourite Books/Comics

"I like *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson. Lovely ideas, great story, very cool."

GRAHAM LINEHAN

**"Hitchhiker's. It was like a carnival taking place in your head."**

CHARLIE BROOKER



"Stephen Baxter's *Voyage*. A very clever idea."

PROFESSOR COLIN PILLINGER

**"As a kid I read a lot of Isaac Asimov and Ray Bradbury, who I still love."**

MACKENZIE CROOK

## Favourite Movies

"*The Empire Strikes Back* – it's the darkest, coolest and best directed of the *Star Wars* films."

SIMON PEGG



**"I saw *Tron* at the Odeon Picture House in 1982 and left the cinema fizzing!"**

MIKE JOYCE, THE SMITHS

"I'm a huge fan of JJ Abrams. In *Star Trek* he lovingly and knowingly plays with the mythos."

QUENTIN TARANTINO



"When I was growing up *Alien* was a huge favourite of mine. I was fascinated by spacecraft, so I couldn't be bothered with the horror; I just love the architecture of the ships."

PROFESSOR BRIAN COX

**"Most sci-fi films are crap."**

ADAM YAUCH, THE BEASTIE BOYS





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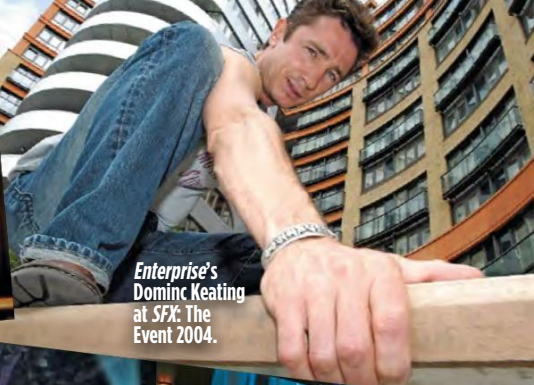


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## THE EVENTS



Edgar Wright's award acceptance video in 2011.

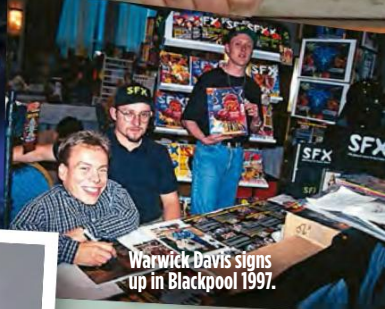
Enterprise's Dominic Keating at SFX: The Event 2004.



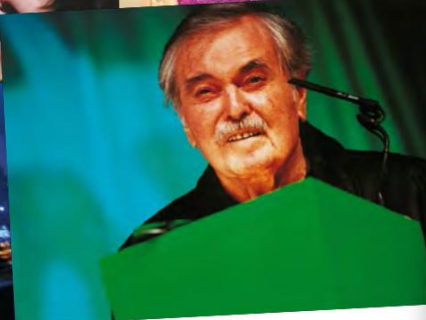
Spikeman at the very first SFX Event in Blackpool.



Eve Myles in Prestatyn, 2012.



Warwick Davis signs up in Blackpool 1997.

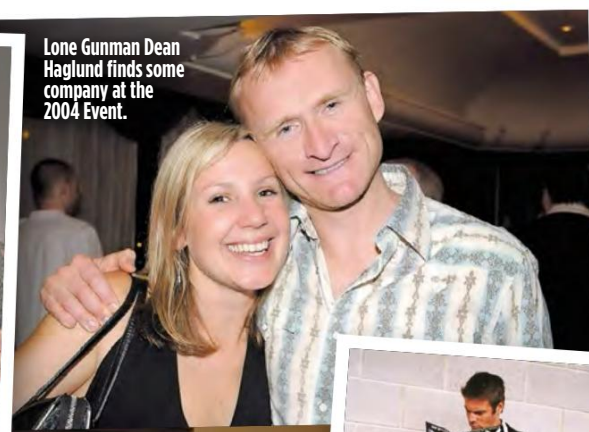


# THE DAYS OF OUR LIVES

Stars! Booze! Queues! Remembering the glorious *SFX* shindigs...



A Michael Rosenbaum fan will never wash again.



Lone Gunman Dean Haglund finds some company at the 2004 Event.



The Dead Zone's Kristen Dalton in the SFX Zone.



Billy Boyd enters the Time Tunnel in 2004.



Chris Barrie presents the 2004 Awards.



Andy Serkis at the 2004 post-Awards party.



Stargate's Michael Shanks shows taste in 2003.







# STILL IN HELL

20 years of tantalising films that never escaped Development Hell...

## VAMPIRATES

**First mentioned: #47**

How is this not greenlit already with a name like that?

## DOMU

**First mentioned: #51**

Guillermo del Toro was to adapt *Akira* creator Katsuhiro Otomo's horror manga about an old man with psychic powers who holds silent sway over an apartment block.

## BROTHER TERMITE

**First mentioned: #54**

James Cameron acquired the rights to Patricia Anthony's tale of political intrigue about aliens who've occupied the United States. The film was never produced. The lizard men told him not to.

## THE TRIPODS

**First mentioned: #56**

Touchstone was considering a film version of John Christopher's *YA War Of The Worlds*, with Graham Yost (*Broken Arrow*) attached to direct.

## BATTLEFIELD EARTH 2

**First mentioned: #62**

Oddly enough, only ever mentioned *before* the first movie came out.

## THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT

**First mentioned: #67**

It's genuinely criminal that Harry Harrison's wonderfully gnarly space hero has never made the big screen, but he came close

in 2000 when director Jan de Bont and Twentieth Century Fox came sniffing.

## THE INVISIBLES

**First mentioned: #85**

Grant Morrison's bizarre psychic investigators on screen? Yes please. The Farrelly brothers directing? Erm, maybe not.

## AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS

**First mentioned: #97**

Guillermo del Toro's cherished Lovecraft project seems to pop up in Development Hell every time he finishes another project. Maybe one day...

## AKIRA

**First mentioned: #98**

The live-action version of the infamous anime is still on the cusp of escaping Development Hell today...

## FOREVER MAN

**First mentioned: #103**

Stan Lee was apparently developing a superhero specifically for the big screen "with unique powers". Not common ones.

## THE FLASH

**First mentioned: #137**

David S Goyer's take on the Fastest Man Alive cropped up many times in Development Hell. What makes it especially intriguing is a quote from prospective star Ryan Reynolds, who mentioned, "I think God's

financing it..." which we think means the script was unfilmmably expensive.

## WONDER WOMAN

**First mentioned: #129**

Specifically the Joss Whedon-scripted version. Bet Warner wish they'd gone for it now.

## THE BLACK HOLE

**First mentioned: #192**

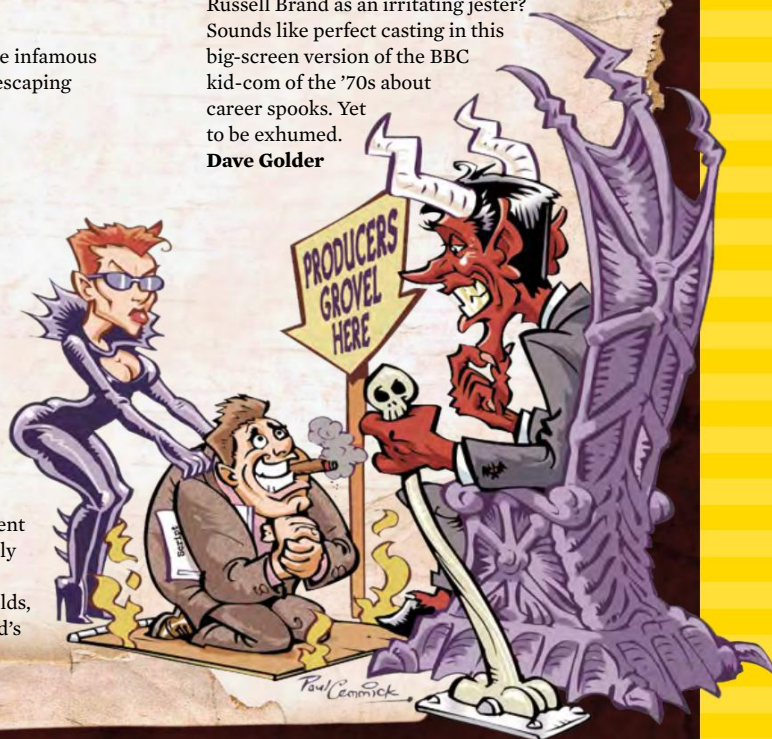
*Tron: Legacy* helmer Joseph Kosinski was hoping to remake Disney's space opera. Presumably they're still trying to write the ending (not that the original bothered).

## RENTAGHOST

**First mentioned: #205**

Russell Brand as an irritating jester? Sounds like perfect casting in this big-screen version of the BBC kid-com of the '70s about career spooks. Yet to be exhumed.

**Dave Golder**







## THE SFX YEARS

### ALL CHANGE

The new SFX logo debuted with issue 128. Yes, it still sometimes looks like SEX. We know.

**T**HE DOCTOR WAS back. It was difficult not to notice. There were billboards. Billboards! Yes, we had an unexpected wobble as Christopher Eccleston announced he was quitting after just one episode had aired, but replacement Time Lord David Tennant took the show to even greater heights of popularity, making nerd-chic effortlessly cool. We also had the spin-offs: the marvellous *Sarah Jane Adventures* for the kids and *Torchwood*, which recovered from a rocky, swearsy start to deliver *Children Of Earth*, a genuine TV event.

The *Who* phenomenon inspired UK TV to try more sci-fi and fantasy. Some of it was great – *Life On Mars*, *Merlin* and the superbly creepy *Apparitions*. Some of it wasn't so great. Yes, *Demons*, we're looking at you. Somewhere in the middle was *Primeval*, ITV's dino drama, forever threatening to become good if it could just work out how to make its monster-of-the-week set-up interesting.

Then there was the whole *Misfits* vs *Being Human* battle: both were witty, dark, yooof-orientated telefantasy and quietly built vociferous fanbases on minority channels. *Misfits* was gloriously potty-minded while Toby Whithouse's supernatural houseshare felt like a genre all its own.

*Red Dwarf* came *Back To Earth* on Dave for adventures so meta that *SFX* itself popped up in the action, with our most collectable cover ever – just 50 copies went into shops.

In America *Lost* was baffling everyone, chiefly because none of the characters had the word "Why?" in their vocabulary.



Our Jordan hangs with the *Misfits* bad boys.

## POLICE PUBLIC BOX

### PHASE 4 2005-2009

# THE NEW WHO-NIVERSE

We meet an old friend and plenty of new ones



And he looked so happy with the role at the start...

Joss Whedon gave us the misunderstood *Dollhouse* while *Enterprise* appeared to have killed off *Star Trek* forever until JJ Abrams rescued it with an audacious big-screen reboot. Syfy (née the Sci-Fi Channel) was in its "whimsy" period with *Eureka*, *Sanctuary* and *Warehouse 13* – odd, considering its biggest critical hit had been the hard as nails *Battlestar Galactica* – while The CW was unashamedly turning into "Teen Syfy" with *Smallville*, *Supernatural* and *The Vampire Diaries*.

Alongside *Lost* and *Star Trek Team* JJ gave

us *Fringe*. At first we weren't sure what to make of this techno-*X-Files*. Then it started going bat's-arse loco on us with alternate universes and we adored it.

*Heroes* debuted, knocked us all for six, and was clearly going to be the biggest thing since *Buff*y. Until the second series, which was rubbish. The cheerleader had been saved. The world suddenly didn't care.

Vampires became a defining phenomenon of this phase with *True Blood* at one end of the cool spectrum and *Twilight* at the other. *30 Days Of Night* proved that the undead didn't have to come with relationship problems while *Let The Right One In* effectively injected the art of the Scandinavian longeur into the bloodsucking genre.

*Revenge Of The Sith* almost made Lucas's prequel trilogy bearable. *Superman Returned* but few noticed. *The X-Files 2* became the least necessary movie in film history. And Marvel, under new screen supremo Kevin Feige, was finally constructing a unified cinematic universe. More importantly, the







## ALL YOU NEED IS GUV

Fire up the Quattro! SFX creates its very own *Ashes to Ashes* comic strip, written by the show's co-creator Matthew Graham. No, we didn't have to jump through 'oops'.

## WHO REMEMBERS?

Vital Statistix was a back-page list feature that chewed through data like xenomorphic blood. Top trivia included "9 Telefantasy shows with David McCallum" and "5 actors who've played Darth Vader" and "13 Bond Themes That Made The UK Top 20" (it's 16 now).



## WEIRDEST PHENOMENON

Slain *Torchwood* hero Ianto got his own shrine in Cardiff. The SFX letters pages were wet with salty tears.

## DON'T QUOTE ME

"I don't want us to be the cast that killed the franchise." Connor Trinneer, *Star Trek: Enterprise* (#129)

"When you reach the level of genius I have, ego falls by the wayside." Joss Whedon (#136)

"I've always been a skinny streak of piss so we might as well accept that." David Tennant (#143)

"We've designed at least four seasons until we get to the point where it's, 'Now we're making stuff up as we go along.'" Damon Lindelof on *Lost* (#149)

"This is not the 21st century I was promised when I started reading science fiction." Ken MacLeod (#157)

## "Red Dwarf went so meta that SFX itself popped up in the action"

company was making great films, with smart directorial and scripting choices.

The true screen superhero revelation, though, came from Christopher Nolan. Marvel were making great comic book movies. Nolan, with *Batman Begins* and even more so with *The Dark Knight*, was creating a whole new paradigm – the urban thriller superhero movie. Comic books were the inspiration; they were not the defining aesthetic.

Justina Robson, Joe Abercrombie, Scott Lynch and John Courtenay Grimwood were making waves in the literary world, while Marvel Comics released the brilliant *Civil War* miniseries. Keep an eye on the big screen for that one...

But most importantly of all, a guy with a freeze gun invited us all to sing along as he found the words to tell us how he felt...

Dave Golder

## BEST HEADLINES

### "CYLON WITNESS"

*Battlestar Galactica* (#131)

### "TALES FROM THE KRYPTONITE"

*Smallville*, used multiple times

### "THE NICK OF TIME"

*Life On Mars* (#139)

### "ONLY GHOULS AND HORSES"

David Jason in ITV's *Ghost Boat* (#142)

### "WALES VERSUS THE UNIVERSE"

*Torchwood* (#150)

### "VILLAGE FATE"

*The Prisoner* (#188)







## THE SFX YEARS



PHASE 5 2010-2015

# SUPERHEROES ASSEMBLE!

Bang up to date with a roster of caped crusaders



Thor: still a fella on the silver screen.

**T**HE GOLDEN AGE OF screen superheroes was here. Mainstream critics carped that the bubble was bound to burst but hey, they'd been saying that since the first "Superhero Summer" in 2008. The Marvel Cinematic Universe was in full swing now, pumping out hit movie after hit movie. When your least successful film is *Captain America: The First Avenger*, you've got little to worry about, especially when your most successful movie, *Avengers Assemble*, is the third biggest box-office money spinner ever.



*The Walking Dead* shows no sign of blisters yet.

DC lagged behind on the big screen. *Green Lantern* was a misfire, *Man Of Steel* was too dour and gritty for its own good and the Nolan Bat trilogy – while brilliant – was too self-contained to build a universe around. But DC shone on the small screen. After a false start as *Mercy Reef* – an Aquaman spin-off from *Smallville* – sank unceremoniously, *Arrow*, *Gotham* and *The Flash* produced some outstanding and stylish episodes.

In the UK the Tennant/Davies era of *Doctor Who* handed over to the Smith/Moffat era, and the show embraced time paradoxes and dark fantasy like never before. The show's 50th anniversary gave us a crowd-pleasing romp that teamed up Tennant with Smith – and threw in a surprise birthday present in the auspicious form of John Hurt as the War Doctor. By the end of 2013 we had yet another new Doctor as Peter Capaldi and his attack eyebrows inherited the key to the TARDIS.

*Lost* finished with an episode pretty much universally loathed, not because answers failed to materialise but because the ones that did were rubbish. Soon after that, *Ashes To Ashes* showed how a beguilingly weird finale should be done.

*Game Of Thrones* and *The Walking Dead* were the kings of cable, taking full advantage of their freedom to be gross and pervy and – most shocking of all – talky to rack up viewing figures the major broadcasters would kill for (bloodily, no doubt). In both cases, popularity came hand-in-hand with critical acclaim.

Another pleasant surprise was a new back-to-basics series of *Red Dwarf* on Dave that was genuinely a return to peak form.

Hammer was back in action with *The Woman In Black*, the most successful UK horror film ever (though no one seemed







## COVERING THE DOCTOR

Our most ambitious cover ever came with *SFX* 194, celebrating Matt Smith's debut as the Doctor in glorious 3D. Even better, we had an exclusive photoshoot with Matt and co-star Karen Gillan. They never ran out of shapes.

## "Lost finished with an episode pretty much universally loathed"

entirely sure what it had overtaken...). *Harry Potter* started a new trend by splitting the last book into two films: *Carry On Camping* and *The Deathly Hallows Part 2*. Peter Jackson went one better by turning *The Hobbit* into three films then never quite figuring out how to pad out the middle one (one page of script saying "Dwarves run from dragon" ending up as 20 minutes of screen time).

Teen sci-fi novels were also staging a cinematic invasion as *The Hunger Games* begat *Divergent* begat *The Maze Runner*. Elsewhere *Troll Hunter* and *Chronicle* proved there was something new you could do with found footage.

Lauren Beukes became the topmost of the literary set, nabbing the Arthur C Clarke award with the extraordinary *Zoo City* (turning up to the ceremony with a fake sloth draped over her shoulders helped ensure coverage by the bloggerati too). DC introduced *The New 52* – a fancy name for yet another reboot – and Marvel retaliated with *Marvel NOW!*.

Oh, and Disney bought *Star Wars*. But that's a story for the future... **Dave Golder**

## EPIC FAIL

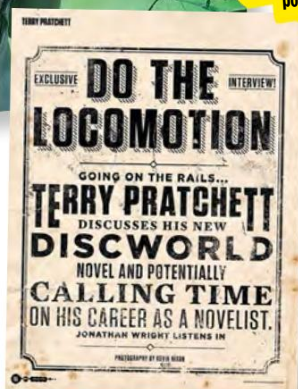
After his work on *300*, Zack Snyder seemed to us the perfect director to bring the work of David Gemmell to screen. Sadly our attempts to influence him by repeatedly and surreptitiously slipping the words "David Gemmell" into a drunken conversation at a Comic-Con party were a complete failure.



Setchfield, Gaiman and Bradley – all *SFX*ers!

## SIGNIFICANT MOMENT

Although we didn't know it at the time, issue 242 was to see our final Terry Pratchett interview. Back in issue 196 he'd been the guest editor, and a jolly time job he made of it too (pro tip: he was powered by bacon samies...).



## BEST HEADLINES

"CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE NERD KIND"

Paul (#205)

"THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE ET"

Cowboys & Aliens (#210)

"SATURDAY KNIGHT FEVER"

Merlin (#211)

"PRESIDENT EVIL"

Abraham Lincoln, Vampire Hunter (#222)

"SCARE IN THE COMMUNITY"

In The Flesh (#233)

"ENTER THE DRAGON"

The Hobbit: The Desolation Of Smaug (#242)

## DON'T QUOTE ME

"After the third orgy it's just another day at the office."

Michelle Forbes, *True Blood* (#193)

"Russell T Davies knows I'm his bitch."

James Marsters (#196)

"I still search every script to make sure Astrid doesn't die."

Fringe's Jasika Nicole (#201)

"You can get very emotional when you're beating the head of a zombie."

Andrew Lincoln (#216)

"We should just make Gollum hot. He's 60 years younger."

Andy Serkis (#229)

"Writer's block is made up – it sounds so much better than, 'I got stuck.'"

Neil Gaiman (#254)



Our mock-up comic for TV's new superheroes.





SFX 2035

# SFX 2035

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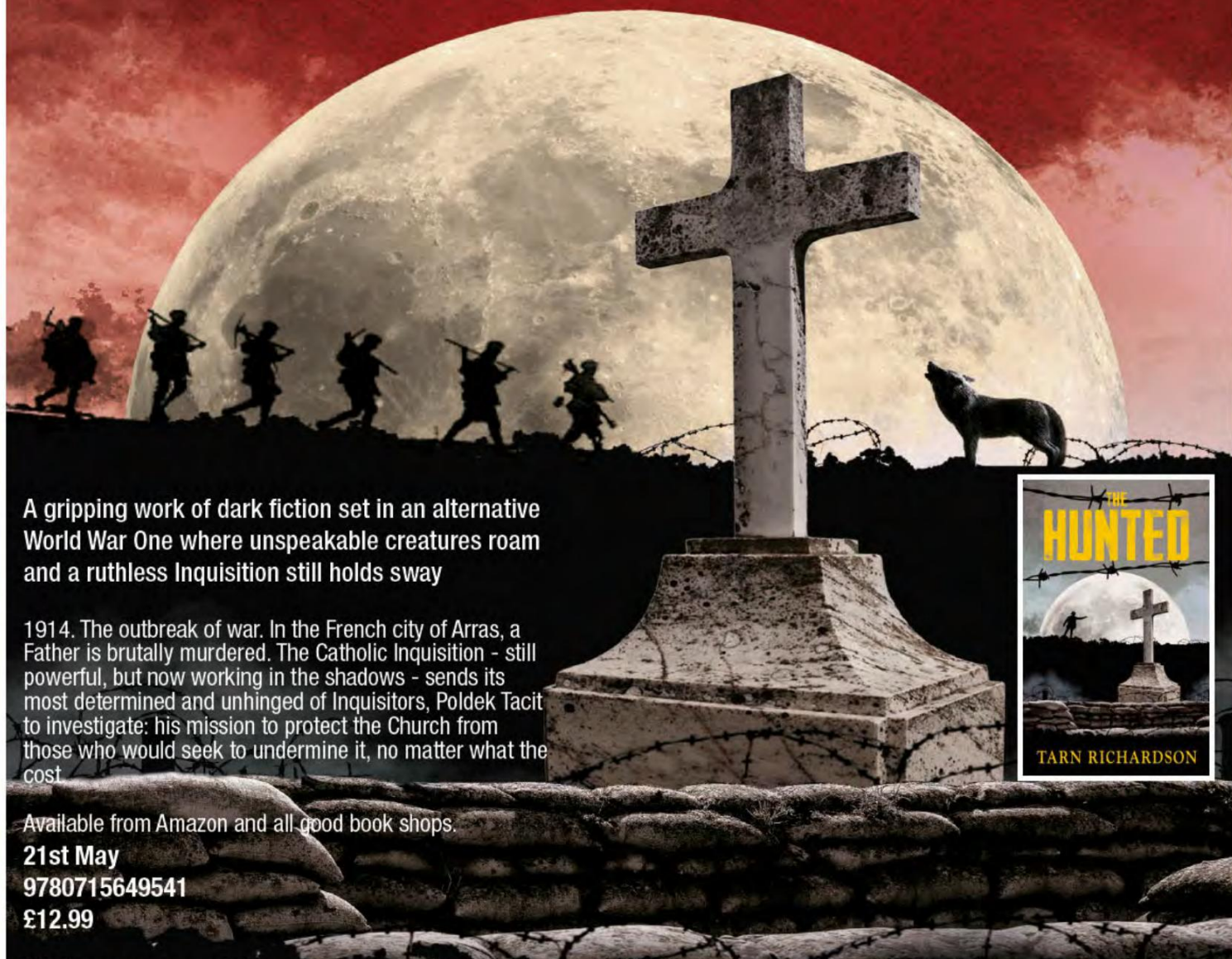


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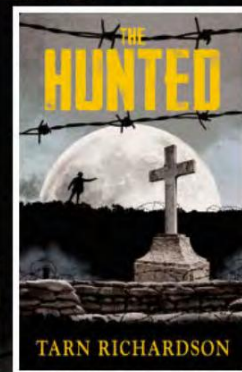


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